

This issue: A preview of **THREAT**, a talk with *Dalgoda's* **JAN STRNAD** about his new Upshot Graphics comics line, and a history of **HAWKMAN!**

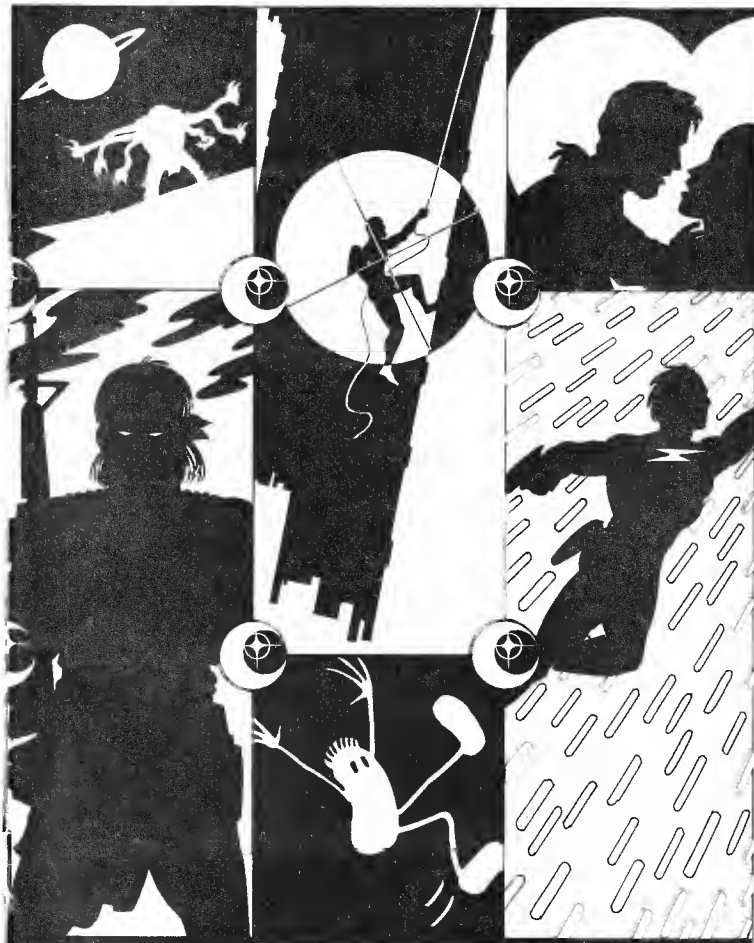
No. 89 • February 15 • \$2.25 (\$3.15 in Canada)

AMAZING HEROES





..... MR MONSTER - THE JOHNNY NEMO MAGAZINE - LASER ERASER AND PRESSBUTTON - THE DNAGENTS - MIRACLEM



THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME.

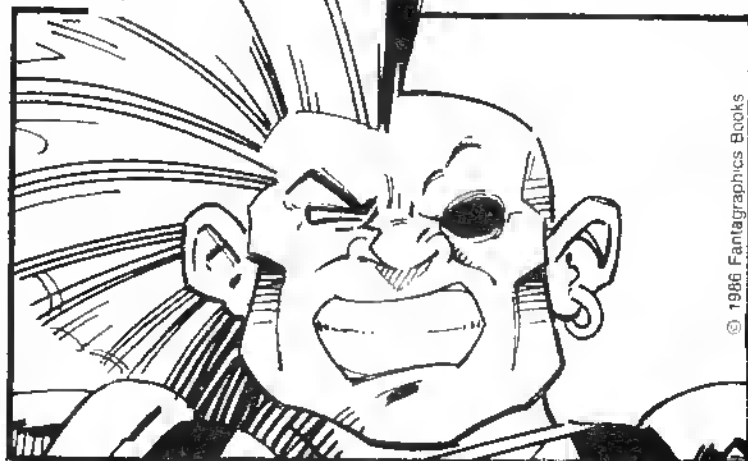
• THE MASKED MAN • ALIEN ENCOUNTERS • SCOUT • CROSSFIRE • TALES OF THE BEANWORLD • TRUE LOVE • ZOTI •

A NIGHT IN THE STYX ...



MAGE

A 15-issue limited series
Bi-monthly from Comico



© 1986 Fantagraphics Books

PREVIEW: Ed Sample examines the whys and wherefores of **THREAT**, Fantagraphics Books' anthology title, on page 22.



© 1986 Strnad and Fujitake

INTERVIEW: Jan Strnad explains to Mark Waid why Dalgoda is spearheading another new comics company on page 30.



© 1986 DC Comics Inc.

HERO HISTORY: Bill Kropfhauser chronicles the history of both the Golden and Silver Age Hawkmen on page 34.

AMAZING HEROES #89 (ISSN 0745-6506), February 15, 1986. Published twice monthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Editorial and business offices: 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura, CA 91301. Office of publication: 25 Juniper Road, PO Box 787, Bethel CT 06801. Entire contents copyright © 1986 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. All rights reserved. No material herein may be copied or reproduced in any manner whatsoever (excluding brief excerpts used solely for review purposes) without written consent of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at Bethel CT and additional mailing offices.

POSTERMASTER: Please send Form 3579 to **AMAZING HEROES**, PO Box 787, Bethel CT 06801.

One-year subscription in U.S.: \$52.80; outside U.S.A., \$70.00 in U.S. funds. Single copy by mail: \$3.00.

Page 6: Editorial

1986—The New Amazing Heroes Universe.
by Kim Thompson

Page 11: Newsflashes

1986—The New Marvel Universe.
by J. Collier

Page 16: Silly Cover

"The Bucketeer."
by Bruce Timm

Page 17: Coming Distractions

On the stands from March 1-15.
by J. Collier

Page 22: No Idle Threat

Behind the scenes of the new anthology title.
by Ed Sample

Page 30: Riding Shotgun for Upshot

Jan Strnad talks about Upshot Graphics.
by Mark Waid

Page 34: Flying High For Almost A Half Century"

A hero history of Hawkman.
by Bill Kropfhauser

Page 48: The First True Alternatives

Before *Elfquest*, before *Cerebus*...
by Ken Jones

Page 51: Comics in Review

Our critic turns his gun
against the hand that feeds him!
by R.A. Jones

Page 61: Amazing Readers

Words from Phil Foglio, Elliot S. Maggin.
by The Readers

Page 66: Small Press Watch

The odd Shakespeare of Steve Willis.
by Scott McCloud

OUR COVER:

Gary Fields, Jay Geldhof, Mike Kraiger, and Jim Rohn combine on this jam cover from **THREAT**. This was colored by the artists and separated by Dave Nelson. Characters © the artists.



back issues

#1-3: SOLD OUT!

- #4: Preview of FRANK MILLER's *Daredevil*, with an original Miller DD cover! \$2.50
- #5: Ka-Zar preview with BRENT ANDERSON cover, DITKO's Spider-Man! \$2.50
- #6: Moon Knight; SIENKIEWICZ cover painting; history of the Doom Patrol! \$2.50
- #7: GIL KANE Micronauts cover/interview; checking in with JAN DUURSEMA! \$2.50
- #8: T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents hero history by DAVID SINGER; FUJITAKE cover! \$2.50
- #9: Captain Carrot preview; SCOTT SHAW! cover, Captain Action history! \$2.50
- #10: Metal Men history, with TERRY AUSTIN cover! Plus the Swamp Thing! \$2.50
- #11: Horror issue: *Night Force* preview *Swamp Thing* history, COLAN cover! \$2.50
- #12: PAUL SMITH stars with a cover, interview, and sketchbook! \$2.50
- #13: 100-page *Star Wars* issue with complete GOODWIN/WILLIAMSON story; original cover by KEVIN NOWLAN! 100 pages! \$3.00
- #14: *Camelot 3000* previewed; BOLLAND cover; Captain Marvel history. \$2.50
- #15: KEITH GIFFEN Legion of Super-Heroes cover and interview! \$2.50
- #16: *New Mutants* previewed; CLAREMONT interviewed; BOB McLEOD cover! \$2.50
- #17: Wolverine and the Marvel killers; Supergirl cover by KEVIN NOWLAN! \$2.50
- #18: *Nexus* spotlighted, special cover by STEVE RUDE! \$2.50
- #19: E-Man interview with PASKO and STATON; Staton cover of the F-Men! \$2.50
- #20: *Amethyst* preview, with ERNIE COLON cover; FRED HEMBECK interview! \$2.50
- #21-22: SOLO OUT!
- #23: *Crystar* featured, with BLEVINS cover! Plus *Challengers of the Unknown*! \$2.50
- #24: DNAgents previewed, with MEUGNIOT cover; article on DD's women! \$2.50
- #25: MILLER's *Ronin*; article/interview/cover; plus: a complete *Star Hawks* tale! \$3.50
- #26: GRAY MORROW's *Edge of Chaos*! Also, RON GOULART's '40s heroes! \$2.50
- #27: Batman issue! JIM APARO cover. MIKE BARR interview, Earth-2's Batman! \$2.50
- #28: *Sword of the Atom* preview with JAN STRNAD and cover artist GIL KANE! \$2.50
- #29: HOWARD CHAYKIN's *American Flagg!* oreviewed! Also: *Alfalfa Flight!* \$2.50
- #30: Preview of *Thriller*, with original VON EEDEN cover! Also: *John J'onzz!* \$2.50
- #31: Big issue, with complete *Star Hawks* story and TOM SUTTON interview! \$3.50
- #32: *Somerset Holmes!* Doc Doom history, and Spider-Woman! \$2.50
- #33: Preview of First Comics' *Mars*; conclusion of Doom history! \$2.50
- #34: Preview of never-issued *Redeemer*, with KUBERT cover! Plus *Enemy Ace!* \$2.50
- #35: *Inferior Five*, with superior cover by NOWLAN; also, *Jack Of Hearts!* \$2.50

- #36: ROY THOMAS on World War II heroes, cover by MACHLAN/ORDWAY! \$2.50
- #37: Rocketeer cover by and interview with DAVE STEVENS! Plus "Skyborne"! \$2.50
- #38: WarP issue, with WENDY PINI cover and WarP article! \$2.50
- #39: 1984 Preview issue! The beginning of a tradition--and still worth having! \$4.00
- #40: Sun-Runners previewed, with PAT BRODERICK cover; Iron Man history. \$2.50
- #41: Red K history, WAYNE BORING interview and cover, Superman movies! \$2.50
- #42: Aardvark-Vanaheim issue, with J. QUAGMIRE interview and jam cover! \$2.50
- #43: Warlock hero history & cosmic cover by WILLIE BLYBERG! "Skyborne" ends! \$2.50
- #44: *Alien Legion* previewed, with cover by FRANK CIROCCO! \$2.50
- #45: ED HANNIGAN interviewed, with great front cover inked by KLAUS JANSON! \$2.50
- #46: An index to the Legion of Super-Heroes! Plus, *Power Pack* cover featured! \$2.50
- #47: KIRBY's *New Gods!* Special embarrassing-cover-color-mistake issue! \$2.50
- #48: *Mr X* previewed, with JAIME HERNANDEZ cover! Also, the BiZarTos! \$2.50
- #49: *Dalgoda* previewed, with DENNIS FUJITAKE cover! Also, Brazilian comics! \$2.50
- #50: 148-page issue! PEREZ interview/cover; O'NEIL and BARR on Batman! \$4.00
- #51: Continuity Comics, with MICHAEL GOLDEN cover! Atomic Knights! \$2.50
- #52: British invasion issue, with BRIAN BOLLAND *Judge Dredd* cover! \$2.50
- #53: BILL WILLINGHAM's *The Elementals* star, with original Willingham cover! \$2.50
- #54-55: SOLO OUT!
- #56: Heroines! Carol Danvers history, Jonni Thunder oreview, NOWLAN cover! \$2.50
- #57: *Starstruck* preview, with KALUTA watercolor cover! *Power Man/Iron Fist!* \$2.50
- #58: *Badger* and *Nexus* previewed, with cover by BUTLER Also: *Secret Six!* \$2.50
- #59: MIKE ZECK talks about *Secret Wars*, and provides a special cover! \$2.50
- #60: Four MANTLO series previewed, with LEONARDI/MIGNOLA/AUSTIN cover! \$2.50
- #61: *Groo the Wanderer* preview ARA-GONES cover. Silver Surfer history! \$2.50
- #62: 1985 Preview issue! Even hotter than before! \$4.00
- #63: B.C BOYER's *Masked Man* featured, with cover! Plus Golden Age Index! \$2.50
- #64: Moon Knight, history, cover by CHRIS WARNER, preview of new series! \$2.50

- #85: Conan history, Black Dragon and Solomon Kane. BOLTON cover! \$2.50
- #66: *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, with original GEORGE PEREZ cover! \$2.50
- #67: JIM SHOOTER on *Secret Wars II*, with BUSCEMA/LEIALOHA cover! \$2.50
- #68: *Ambush Bug*, DONALD SIMPSON, hoaxes, GIFFEN/AUSTIN cover! \$2.50
- #69: MILLER interview, with Elektra/Batman cover! Phantom Stranger history! \$2.50
- #70: *Squadron Supreme* previewed, with new cover by HALL and BEATTY! \$2.50
- #71: SOLD OUT!
- #72: ENGLEHART's *Hawkeye/Vision/Scarlet Witch* previewed, HOWELL cover! \$2.50
- #73: *Eternals* preview and history, with SAL BUSCEMA/AL GORDON cover! \$2.50
- #74: DAVE COCKRUM's *Futurians* previewed, plus Supergirl eulogized! \$2.50
- #75: CHRIS CLAREMONT interviewed; also, behind the scenes at *Robotech!* \$3.50
- #76: The Hulk/Alpha Flight switch; cover by MIGNOLA and BYRNE! \$2.75
- #77: *Mr. Monster* preview; cover by GILBERT/ LOEBS/BISSETTE/TOTLEBEN! \$2.75
- #78: Preview of the new *Outsiders*; APARO cover; KITCHEN interview! \$2.75
- #79: *DC Challenge* elucidated; CHUCK PATTON on B'wana Beast! JLA part 2! \$2.75
- #80: *Blood of the Beast* preview; full-color cover! Also: Omega, and Byrne's FF! \$2.75
- #81: A preview of *Scout*, with a TIM TRUMAN cover! Plus a look at Atlas Comics! \$2.75
- #82: Marvel's mutants indexed, the new *Sun-Runners*, "Small Press" debuts! \$2.75
- #83: *X-Factor* preview; cover by GUICE & LAYTON, plus part 2 of mutants index! \$2.75
- #84: The history of Batman, with a STEVE BISSETTE cover. Plus a look at Omac! \$2.75
- #85: The history of Batman concludes, plus an interview with ALAN DAVIS! \$2.75
- #86: *Hawkmoon* previewed, with KAYANAN cover, plus a Scarlet Witch history! \$2.75
- #87: Previews of *Electric Blue* and *Lords of the Ultra Realm*; BAIKIE cover! \$2.75
- #88: CHAYKIN's *Shadow* previewed; a look at the new *American Flagg!* team! \$2.75
- #89: Preview of *Threat*, Hawkman history, and an interview with JAN STRNAD. \$2.75
- Best of AH #1: Reprints from the first six issues, including previews and histories, new art from MILLER, BYRNE, more! \$4.50
- AH Preview Special #1: Summer 1985 issue, with more than 250 previews, and a SCOTT McCLOUD *Zot!* cover! \$4.50



ISN'T IT TIME YOU SUBSCRIBED?

After all, it's pretty risky trotting down to your local comics shoppe every two weeks to pick up the latest issue of **Amazing Heroes**. . . you never know when an issue might have *gasp* *sold out* just before you get there.

So why not save yourself some potential grief and heartache and *subscribe*? Not only are you guaranteed to receive each and every issue. . . not only will they be dropped right on your very doorstep, sparing you many expensive and potentially embarrassing hours on the road. . . but, as if this all weren't enough, you'll actually *save money*!

That's right! You can actually save close to 1/3 off the cover price—and be insured against any price increases. (They do happen, you know.)

So subscribe today, and get your regular fix of **Amazing Heroes**' dynamic combination of news, reviews, histories, interviews, coming comics, cartoons, indexes, and all-around entertainment—sent directly to your home!

Rush me the next 12 issues of **Amazing Heroes**, plus the next **Amazing Heroes Preview Special**, for the low subscription price of \$21.95.

Rush me the next 24 issues of **AH**, plus the next two **Preview Specials**, for the extra low price of \$39.95.

If, at any time, I am not satisfied, you will refund my money for all unmailed issues.

Also, send me the following back issues of **AH**:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AH Preview Special #1 (\$4.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #44 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #67 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Best of AH #1 (\$4.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #45 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #68 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> # 4 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #25 (\$3.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #46 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> # 5 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #26 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #47 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> # 6 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #27 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #48 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> # 7 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #28 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #49 (\$4.00) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> # 8 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #29 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #50 (\$4.00) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> # 9 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #30 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #51 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #10 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #31 (\$3.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #52 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #11 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #32 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #53 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #12 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #33 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #56 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #13 (\$3.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> #34 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #57 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #14 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #35 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #58 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #15 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #36 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #59 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #16 (\$3.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> #37 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #60 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #17 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #38 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #61 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #18 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #39 (\$4.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> #62 (\$4.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #19 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #40 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #63 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #20 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #41 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #64 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #23 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #42 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #65 (\$2.50) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> #24 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #43 (\$2.50) | <input type="checkbox"/> #66 (\$2.50) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> #87 (\$2.75) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> #88 (\$2.75) |

Send to:

**AMAZING HEROES
(Subscription Department)
4359 Cornell Road
Agoura, CA 91301**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

(Make check or money order payable to **Amazing Heroes**.
Outside the U.S., add \$2.00—U.S. funds only, please.)

SPECIAL DOLLAR-AN-ISSUE OFFER: Order five or more back issues before March 20, 1986 and receive them at **ONE DOLLAR** each—plus \$2.00 postage (\$3.00 in Canada). Sorry—offer only good in U.S. and Canada.

1986—The New AH Universe

With this issue of *Amazing Heroes*, we shift back into third gear. I know that for a few months there, we were sort of puttering along in second, but we've fixed the clutch, the engine sounds great, and we're all gassed up. Sometime during the summer we'll go into fourth, and there'll be no stopping us then.

First of all, two hearty "welcome aboard"s to the brand new *Amazing Heroes* staff of DALE CRAIN and DAVID SMAY.

Dale Crain's career in art-directing stretches back eight years, ranging from such publications as *Pro Bass Monthly* (which is exactly what you think it is, and has been the source of endless jokes around the office) to hooks for Doubleday. After assembling an issue with Dale in five days flat, I can safely say that in terms of production efficiency, we're well in the groove.

Our first order of business will be to straighten out the schedule of *Amazing Heroes*, which has sagged a little in the last few months. With a couple of weekly issues tossed in between now and June, we should be back on our feet by early summer—and then we'll really cut loose! I've asked Dale to revamp the entire magazine from top to bottom, and the new-look *AH* is scheduled to make its entrance with issue #96—an issue that will feature a Superman cover by some new guy who hasn't drawn the Man of Steel much before, but who we hear is planning some interesting stuff.

Interestingly enough, Dale is an old friend of *AH* reviewer R.A. Jones's, and even contributed an illo to a hero history of R.A.'s a while back. It's a small world, ain't it?

But great art direction can't do much without some nifty editorial material. Playing librettist to the operatic page compositions of Dale's (good God! This is beginning to sound like a *NEMO* editorial) will be one David Smay. David, as you may have guessed, is the person elected from among the many contenders to the *Amazing Heroes* editorial position. There were an awful lot of good letters, and an awful lot of people I would have loved to hire, but in the end, David won out by a hair. David also had the added advantage of being already in the L.A. area, saving everyone some wear and tear.

David will begin working himself into *Amazing Heroes* starting with the very next issue, and by the time the above-mentioned watershed 96th issue rolls around, he should be in full control of the magazine. He has already submitted a list of ten different ideas for sprucing up the content of *Amazing Heroes*, and between his enthusiasm and Dale's enthusiasm, I predict *AH* will enter into its sixth year of continued publication better than ever!

In order to accommodate all these nifty new ideas, by the way, we will be raising the page count of *AH* by eight or 16 pages come summer (with a teeny price hike of a quarter to pay for the extra paper and

stuff). But wait 'til you see what we're going to be filling those pages with!

And I'd also like to take a moment to thank exiting *AH* editor and art director Art Cover and Mark Bondurant, who did well on a tough assignment. Neither of them was entirely on-staff during their tenure on the book (both had other commitments), and *AH* is the kind of magazine that's difficult enough to manage on-staff, let alone from a distance or on an irregular basis. (Both Dale and David are full staffers, which should help immeasurably.)

Those who miss Art, though, should start picking up *The Comics Journal*, which will soon be publishing a scad of his reviews.

Some apologies are due to *Amazing Heroes* subscribers, who may have found delivery of their copies somewhat more erratic than usual. (Even during the best of times, the Post Office usually arranges for a strange, syncopated rhythm of delivery that bemuses all but the most laid-back of readers.) What happened is that our subscription service's central (and only) computer went down for several weeks, and with it went all our subscription lists, severely affecting our subscriptions. Stopping them dead, in fact. By the time you read this, however, the computer should be functioning again, churning out mailing labels as if there were no tomorrow. Still, if you're missing any issues off your subscription (whether paid, complimentary, advertiser's, or whatever), drop a note to "THE COMPUTER ATE MY A.H.," c/o Julie Strnad, 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura, CA 91301.

Speaking of subscriptions and back issues and such, as we were, we're having a warehouse-clearing sale on *all* issues of *Amazing Heroes*. You can now buy any issue of *AH* for only a *dollar*—so long as you (a) order five or more different back issues; (b) include \$2.00 (\$3.00 in Canada) for postage; and (c) get your order in before March 20.

After that, we plan to run most of our *Amazing Heroes* backstock through the paper shredder. (If you think that's a cruel and senseless thing to do, you haven't moved 200 boxes of back issues on and off a truck three times.)

Well, looks like I set up quite a bit of space for myself to fill here, so let me take you on a quick tour of the next few issues of *Amazing Heroes*:

In #90, we'll have a long interview with Bruce Jones, conducted by yours truly, as well as a preview of Marvel's *The Comet Man* series. The cover is a full-color drawing by Dennis Fujitake that has *nothing whatsoever* to do with anything on the inside! So there!

Amazing Heroes #91 is the special Post-Crisis issue, and will include a checklist of *Crisis on Infinite Earths'* cast of characters, interviews with the perpetrators of the crisis, an article on the changes wrought by the Crisis, a preview of the new Crisis

EDITORIAL

series, all topped off by a great new George Perez cover which we preview somewhere on this page.

In #92, we talk with Valentino, creator of *normal-man* and current artist of *MythAdventures*.

Issue #93 will be the long-delayed Demon issue, with a history of Jack Kirby's character and a preview of Matt (Mage) Wagner's interpretation, with a full-color Wagner cover!

Issue #94 is a preview of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons's long-awaited *Watchmen* series.

Amazing Heroes #95 is the long-delayed Marvel Productions issue—we hope.

Issue #96, as mentioned above, is the first new new *Amazing Heroes*, with a cover feature previewing John Byrne's Superman, and lots of other neat stuff.

Jonny Quest is the star of #97, with a smashing new Doug Wildey cover.

... And that's about as far as the *precise* planning goes, but future issues beyond that will include previews of First's *Dreadstar*, Marvel's New Universe, *Elektra*, DC's new *Spectre*, and others series as yet undreamed of; interviews with David Mazzuchelli, Stephen DeStefano (who's doing the cover to this summer's *Mazing—I mean Amazing Heroes Preview Special*), and many others. And much, much more—including a 100th issue that will knock your eyes out!

If you thought the summer of '85 hit a record high for *Amazing Heroes* (and it *did* include Miller, Byrne, Moore, Cockrum, and Claremont, after all)—well, we plan on 86'ing that record in '86.

Hey, pretty snappy slogan there. Sounds like a good time to end this mess.

See you in 15!

KIM THOMPSON

© 1986 DC Comics Inc.



STAFF

Managing Editor: Arthur Byron Cover
Art Director: Dale Crain
Executive Editor: Kim Thompson
News Correspondent: Tom Heintjes
Assistant Editor: Andrew Christie
Production Assistant: Dave Nelson
Typesetting: L.M. Gorell & Arlene Easter
Circulation: Julie Strnad
Publisher: Fantagraphics Books, Inc.
Printed at: Port Publications, WI

CONTRIBUTOR'S INFO

Art: Address all submissions to "Art Director, *Amazing Heroes*," 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301. 2) Send Xeroxes first; originals will be requested upon acceptance. 3) Put your name and address on the back of each original. 4) Always enclose an S.A.S.E. for reply and return of your submissions.

Writing: 1) Address all submissions to "Editor, *Amazing Heroes*," 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301. 2) Please enclose an S.A.S.E. for return of your manuscript—if you want it returned, that is. 3) All submissions will be read and answered within a month—or at least we'll try real hard. 4) Submissions must be typed; please double-space your copy. 5) Please keep a Xerox copy of your manuscript for yourself, and include your name, complete address, and phone number on the first page of the article.

AD RATES

Full page ad. \$150
 [Format: 6" x 9"]
 Half page ad. \$80
 [Format: 3" x 9" (vertical); or 3¾" x 6¾" (island);
 or 6" x 4½" (horizontal)]
 Third page ad. \$60
 [Format: 1¾" x 9" (vertical); or 3¾" x 5" (island);
 or 6" x 3" (horizontal)]

DISTRIBUTORS

Andromeda Publications, Ltd.: 367 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2A4, Canada (416) 593-9894
Bud Plant, Inc.: PO Box 1886, Grass Valley, CA 95945, U.S.A. (916) 273-9588
Capital City Distribution: 2827 Perry Street, Madison, WI 53713 U.S.A. (608) 274-8987
Cavco, Inc.: 114 "A" Bldg., 1401 Fairfax Trafficway, Kansas City, KS 66115, U.S.A. (608) 274-8987
Diamond Book Distributors: 1720 Belmont Ave., Bay B-2, Baltimore, MD, 21207, U.S.A. (301) 298-1184
Fantagraphics Books: 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301, U.S.A. (818) 706-7606
Glenwood Distributors: 124 Vandalia, Collinsville, IL, 62234, U.S.A. (618) 345-1027
Second Genesis: 1112 NE 21st Street, Portland, OR 97232, U.S.A. (503) 281-1821
Styx Comics Service: 1858 Arlington Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2X 1W6, Canada (204) 586-8547
Titan Distributors, Inc.: P.O. Box 250, London E3 4RT, ENGLAND (01) 836-6167.

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Aircel.....64	Eclipse Comics.....2-3
Amazing Heroes.....6-7	F's Books.....46-47, 50
B-Movie Presents.....60	First Comics.....15
Blackthorne Publishing.....19	Marvel Comics Group.....10
Comics Interview.....40	NOW Comics.....25
Comico.....4	Renegade Press.....29, 62
Dalgoda.....67	Stages.....55
DC Comics.....back cover	US Comics.....39



DAKOTA NORTH

INVESTIGATIONS

NEW YORK · PARIS · ROME · TOKYO



A HOT NEW SERIES IN THE TRADITION OF MODESTY BLAISE AND MIAMI VICE!

FROM MARVEL

NEWSFLASHES

NEWS FROM THE NEW UNIVERSE: This July and August, eight new books will debut from Marvel, forming the cornerstone of the "New Universe," Marvel's self-contained macrocosm that was created by, among others, JIM SHOOTER, ARCHIE GOODWIN, MARK GRUENWALD, TOM DeFALCO, and ELIOT BROWN.

Details on the Universe are not being made available by Marvel, except that the books will be monthly in the 75-cent format currently in use by Marvel, and that all eight of the books are ongoing series. Creative teams have not been announced.

1961 — THE MARVEL UNIVERSE



1986 — THE NEW UNIVERSE!

IT ALL BEGINS THIS SUMMER.

DAREDEVIL NEWS: *Daredevil* #s 235-236 will be drawn by WALT SIMONSON and written by FRANK MILLER. This move delays the two-part story one month, and #234 will be a fill-in issue drawn by STEVE DITKO.

Daredevil #231 has been rejected by the Comics Code Authority due to its portrayal of a hypodermic needle. The issue will go to press without the Code's seal of approval, according to writer FRANK MILLER.



BEFORE THE X-MEN: Wolverine's debut (in *Incredible Hulk* #s 180-181) will be reprinted in a deluxe format this June. The book will be rounded out by a six-page story teaming Wolverine with Hercules, which is written by JO DUFFY, and drawn by KEN LANDGRAF and GEORGE PEREZ. That story originally appeared in *Marvel Treasury Edition* #26. Also, the book will contain a text piece written by *Marvel Saga* scribe PETER SANDERSON that will reveal Wolverine's creation through discussions with LEN WEIN (who wrote the *Hulk* issues), CHRIS CLAREMONT, JOHN BYRNE, and others.

The 48-page *Wolverine* will cost \$2.00, and will boast a new wraparound cover by JOHN BYRNE and JACK ABEL.

ANNUAL UPDATE: *Web of Spider-Man Annual* #2, shipping May 20, will be by the *Longshot* team of writer ANN NOCENTI and artist ART ADAMS. The book will guest-star Warlock of the New Mutants. . . *Captain America Annual* #8, also shipping May 20, features the creative team of writer MARK GRUENWALD, penciller MIKE ZECK, and inker JOHN BEATTY. Wolverine will guest-star in that book.

NEWSFLASHES

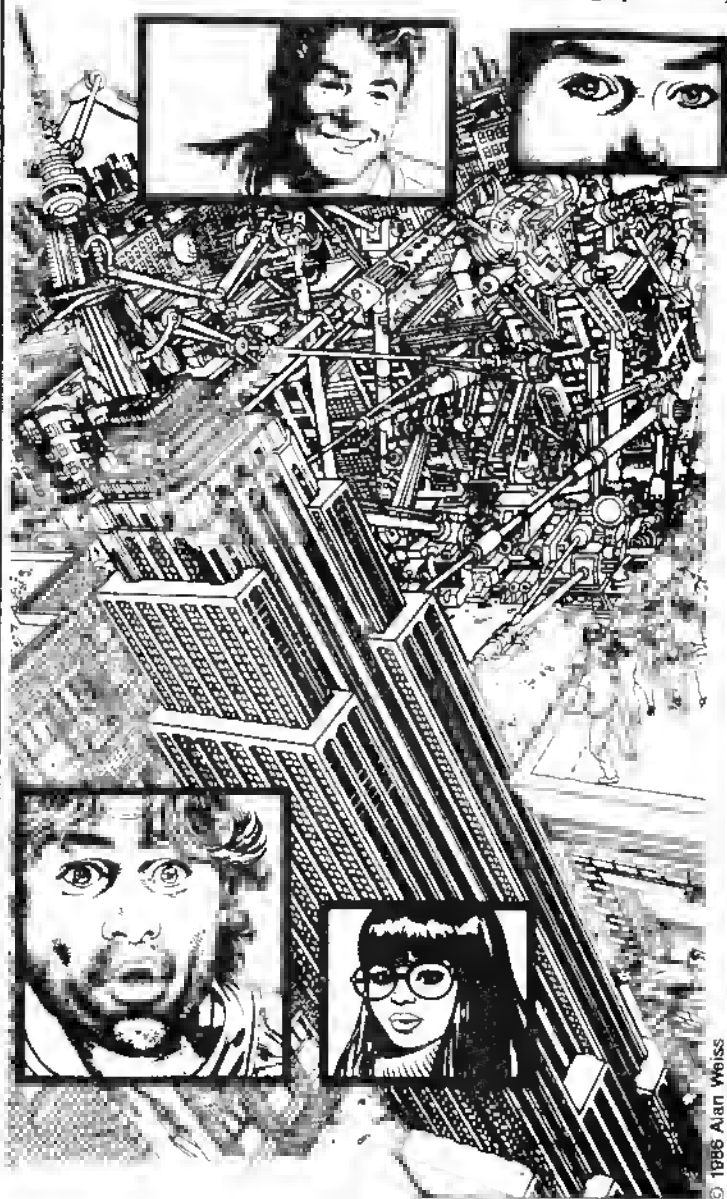
GRAPHIC NOVEL NEWS: BERNI WRIGHTSON's Spider-Man graphic novel, *Hooky*, has been rescheduled once again, now to ship April 22. . . The Doctor Strange graphic novel, by J.M. DeMATTEIS and DAN GREEN, will ship May 27. . . *Greenberg the Vampire*, the graphic novel by DeMATTEIS and artist MARK BADGER, will ship September 9.

MORE MARVEL NEWS THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT:

Dazzler will guest-star in *New Mutants* #42, out in April. In that issue, written by CHRIS CLAREMONT, pencilled by JACKSON GUICE, and inked by TERRY AUSTIN, Cannonball travels back to Cumberland, Kentucky. . . The Sub-Mariner, Avengers, and Doctor Strange guest-star in *Alpha Flight* #37, and the same group will be on-hand to witness the birth of Snowbird's child in #38. . . *Power Pack* #25 will be double-sized, selling for \$1.25, and will feature the conclusion of the Snark Wars, as the Pack's powers are dramatically changed. The issue will be out in mid-April. . . Ikaris declares all-out war on the Deviants in *Eternals* #11, written by WALT SIMONSON, pencilled by SAL BUSCEMA, and inked by DANNY BULANADI. . . *GI Joe* #50 will contain a preview of *GI Joe Special Missions*, debuting in June by LARRY HAMA and HERB TRIMPE. After the preview, HAMA and TRIMPE will produce *Special Missions*, shipping June 3. *Special Missions* will spotlight individual *Joe* members in action. . . *Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man* #122, by PETER DAVID, RICH BUCKLER, and BOB McLEOD, features Doctor Strange, the Black Cat, and Luther Manning (better known as Deathlok), as the story of the sudden disappearance of Spider-Man continues. Begun in *Web of Spider-Man* #17, the story continues into *Spider-Man* #279. . . LOUISE SIMONSON becomes the regular writer of *X-Factor* with #7, still drawn by JACKSON GUICE and JOE RUBINSTEIN. . . Top Dog and Heathcliff team up in *Top Dog* #9, by SID JACOBSON, WARREN KREMER, and JACKIE ROETTCHE. . . In *Heathcliff* #9, the feisty feline encounters a vampire cat. . . *The Misfits*, a six-issue limited series by JO DUFFY and KERRY GAMMILL, will debut on June 10. The series will guest-star Sunspot, Warlock, and more familiar (as well as new) faces. . . *Classic X-Men* has been rescheduled to ship on September 2. . . There's no rest for the weary Avengers, even after the Kang trilogy that ended in #269. In *Avengers* #270, the deadliest incarnation of the Masters of Evil wage war against Earth's mightiest heroes. . . DAVID MICHELINIE is the new regular writer of *Iron Man*, as of #215, shipping October 28. . . KYLE BAKER becomes the regular inker on *New Mutants* with #44, out in mid-June. . . MIKE

ZECK and BOB McLEOD become the regular art team on *Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man* with #123, joining writer PETER DAVID.

From Alan Weiss's Epic Comic *Steelgrip Starkey*.



As for the Epic line: *Steelgrip Starkey and His Incredible Power Tool*, by ALAN WEISS and JIM SHERMAN, finally debuts May 20. JOHN RIDGWAY will fill in on *The Bozz Chronicles* #4. Regular artist BRET BLEVINS returns with issue #5, just in time for a two-part story.

BYRNE ON TITANS: JOHN BYRNE tackles the Teen Titans in that group's *Annual* #2. The book will cost \$2.50, and will be on sale in late May. In the same book will be a story drawn by JIM BAIKIE that deals with the origin of Brother Blood.

THE LIMELIGHT: *Teen Titans Spotlight* is a new monthly series that will feature individual members of the group, varying from single-issue tales to mini-series length, with a rotating schedule of guest artists. The first issue has Starfire coping with apartheid in South Africa, with art by DENYS COWAN. Issue #2 will feature Cyborg, and artists on future issues will feature KEVIN O'NEILL, STEVE DILLON, and other DC

artists. GEORGE PEREZ will do the covers to the series.

HOPING AGAINST HUNGER: DC is doing its part to help with the Ethiopian famine relief effort with *Heroes Against Hunger*. The book will be a 48-page special featuring various artists and writers, including FRANK MILLER, JIM STARLIN, and BERNI WRIGHTSON, with the cover by NEAL ADAMS and DICK GIORDANO. The book, out in late May, will cost \$1.50.



© 1986 DC Comics Inc

Barbara Slate's *Angel Love*, takes DC into the '80s with these stories about a young woman struggling to make it in the big city.

DC NEWS: *Angel Love* is a new eight-issue limited series by BARBARA SLATE. The series, which DC is calling "an *Archie* for the '80s," features the adventures of a young woman artist struggling to make it in the big city. The first issue will be on sale in early May. . . BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH will do the cover to *Tales of the Teen Titans #68*. . . *The Outsiders #20* introduces DC's first communist super-team, "The People's Heroes". . . In *Secret Origins #5* ROY THOMAS and GENE COLAN tackle the origin of the Crimson Avenger. . . In late May, *Hawkman #1* debuts—only this time, it's not a mini-series, but is instead an ongoing series by writer TONY ISABELLA, penciller RICHARD HOWELL, and inker DON HECK.

CHAYKIN ON FLAGG!: *American Flagg!* creator HOWARD CHAYKIN will produce the *American Flagg! Special #1*, shipping in July. The book, which will run 28 Baxter pages for \$1.75, will serve as an introduction to Chaykin's forthcoming *Time²* graphic novel series.

KITCHEN SINK NEWS: *Ground Pound*, a collection of some of JOHN POUND's work over the past 10 years, has been cancelled due to editorial difficulties. According to Kitchen, another publisher may be picking up this title. . . *Death Rattle #3* and *Megaton Man #8* will ship two weeks later than expected, in the last week of February rather than the second one. This is the first time Kitchen's color titles have shipped late. . . The 3-D *Steve Canyon*, originally announced for February and later delayed to April, has now been delayed until June. Problems arose in getting material from MILTON CANIFF's archives and getting the overworked RAY ZONE to complete the book. . . *Robert Crumb 3-D* has not yet been scheduled, but it is next in line behind the delayed *Steve Canyon 3-D* book.

AND WE MEAN ANYTHING: The Comics Journal, Inc. will publish a three-part series, *Anything Goes*, beginning in June. The book's proceeds will go towards paying the libel suits the *Journal* is fighting. Creators in the book are being asked to do short stories about anything they want, and they are donating the work to *Anything Goes*.

Creators or creative teams on the book will include, PETER BAGGE, PAT BOYETTE, BOB BURDEN, ROBERT CRUMB, DENNIS FUJITAKE, STEVE GERBER (teamed with BILL WILLINGHAM), MICHAEL T. GILBERT, MARC HEMPEL, JAIME HERNANDEZ, GIL KANE, JACK KIRBY (with inks by JOE SINNOTT), STEVE LEIALOHA, KEVIN NOWLAN, ALAN MOORE (teamed with DONALD SIMPSON), PAUL RIVOCHÉ, ARN SABA (teamed with TRINA ROBBINS), DAVE SIM, JAN STRNAD (working with GILBERT HERNANDEZ), MARK WHEATLEY, and MARV WOLFMAN (working with an as-yet undetermined artist).



© 1986 Jaime Hernandez

A panel from Jaime Hernandez's story in *Anything Goes*, *The Comics Journal's* lawsuit fund-raiser.

NEWSFLASH



DC Comics' recent editorial shuffling has settled down, and the following is the result of the changes.

DENNY O'NEIL—*Batman*, *Detective Comics*, *Warlord*, *Fury of Firestorm*, *The Demon* (four-issue mini-series), the Batman and Joker graphic novel, and the original graphic novel line.

ANDY HELFER—*Legend of Superman* (six-issue mini-series), *Superman*, *Adventures of Superman* (replacing *DC Comics Presents*, with renumbering at issue #1), *Action Comics*, *Justice League of America*, and *Green Lantern Corps* (replacing *Green Lantern* with issue #201).

MIKE GOLD—*The Shadow* (four-issue mini-series), *Vigilante*, *Flash* (a new series under development), *New Teen Titans*, and *Teen Titans Spotlight*.

KAREN BERGER—*Amethyst*, *Legion of Super-Heroes*, *Swamp Thing*, *Angel Love* (eight-issue mini-series), *Blue Beetle*, and *Wonder Woman* (new series under development, to be drawn by GEORGE PEREZ).

ALAN GOLD—*Mazing Man*, *Blue Devil*, *Booster Gold*, *Hawkman*, *Tallus of the Wilderness Seas* (six-issue mini-series), and *Aquaman* (four-issue mini-series).

BOB GREENBERGER (associate editor)—*Star Trek*, *Who's Who*, *Spectre* (four-issue mini-series), *Secret Origins* (of which Greenberger is the coordinating editor), and *History of the DC Universe*.

BARBARA RANDALL (associate editor)—*Adventure of the Outsiders*, *Tales of the Teen Titans*, *Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes*, *Infinity Inc.*, and the deluxe reprint series. Randall is the associate editor for *All-Star Squadron*, *Hex*, and *The Outsiders*.

ROY THOMAS (creative editor)—*All-Star Squadron*, *Infinity, Inc.*, *Secret Origins*, and the *Justice Society of American Special*.

MARV WOLFMAN (creative editor)—*New Teen Titans*, *Teen Titans Spotlight*, and *History of the DC Universe*.

MIKE BARR (writer/editor)—*Outsiders*.

MICHAEL FLEISHER (writer/editor)—*Hex*.

DOUG MOENCH (writer/editor)—*Electric Warrior*, and *Lords of the Ultra-Realm*.

DC also has five editors under special assignment, meaning their editorial duties are limited to a smaller group of books. They are:

RICHARD BRUNING—*Deadman* (four-issue mini-series).

MURRAY BOLTINOFF—*GI Combat*, and *Sgt. Rock*.

ED HANNIGAN—*Elvira's House of Mystery* (12-issue maxi-series).

JULIE SCHWARTZ—*Son of Ambush Bug* (six-issue mini-series), and the line of science-fiction graphic novels.

LEN WEIN—*Watchmen* (12-issue maxi-series), and *Who's Who* (to which Wein is a contributing editor).

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES™



IN COLOR!



in **GRIM
JACK!** #26

**IN MUNDEN'S BAR!
BY EASTMAN & LAIRD!**

COMING IN MAY FROM

**FIRST
COMICS**
© 1985 FIRST COMICS, INC.

Silly Cover

No. 1
\$1.50



PRESENTS:

the BUCKETEER!

By
Deve Stevens



Illustration by and © 1986 BRUCE TIMM

by Bruce Timm

Coming DISTRACTIONS

MARCH 1-15

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

- CEREBUS THE AARDVARK #84**
Story/Art/Cover.....Dave Sim
Backgrounds.....Gerhard
[\$1.70 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships 3/15]

AMERICOMICS

- FAZE 1 #4**
Final issue.
Story/Art.....Vic Bridges
[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships in March]
- NIGHTVEIL #6**
Story.....Steve Ringgenberg
Art.....Mark Heike
[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships in March]

ARROW COMICS

- THE REALM #1**
A fantasy/adventure story about four college students transported into another world.
Story.....Griffith & Kerr
Art.....Davis & Dzon
Cover.....Sandy Schreiber
[\$1.50 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships 2/21]

"Drakestar's Gold"

A group of female mercenaries stage a daring raid on the treasure trove of the evil Drakestar, Lord of the Avian Empire.

All by Zimmerman & Van Camp
[\$1.75 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships in March]

B-MOVIE COMICS

- B-MOVIE PRESENTS... #1**
"Captain Daring of the Interplanetary Police Force"
Story/Art/Cover Ken Holewczynski
"The World of X-Ray"
Story/Art.....Mark Paniccia
[\$1.70 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships 3/10]



© 1986 B-Movie Comics

BLACKTHORNE

- ADVENTURES IN THE MYSTWOOD #1**
Introducing beautiful princess Zara, the Delves, and many other fantastic characters.
All by... John Arthur Williams
[\$2.00 black-and-white direct-sales comic; ships in March]

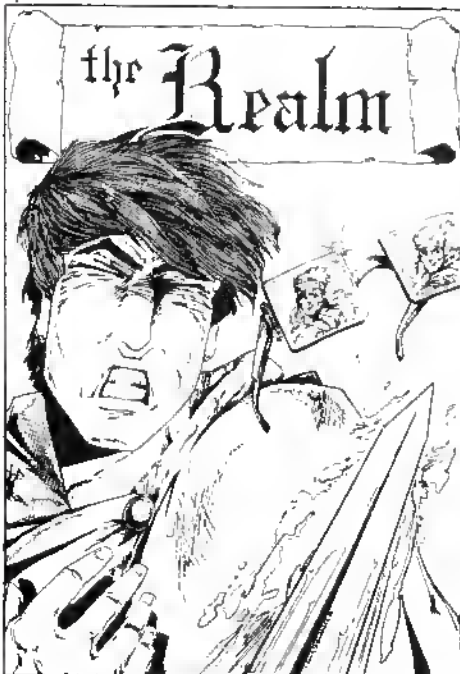
COMICO

- ROBOTECH, THE NEW GENERATION #6**
"Hard Time"
Rook Bartley has a hard time confronting her past.
Story.....Jack Herman
Art.....Byers & Poston
[\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/7]

DC COMICS

- BATMAN #397**
Two-Face is back!
Story.....Doug Moench
Art/Cover.....Tom Mandrake
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18, newsstand o/s 4/10]
- BLUE BEETLE #2**
The final battle between the Beetle and Firetist!
Story.....Len Wein

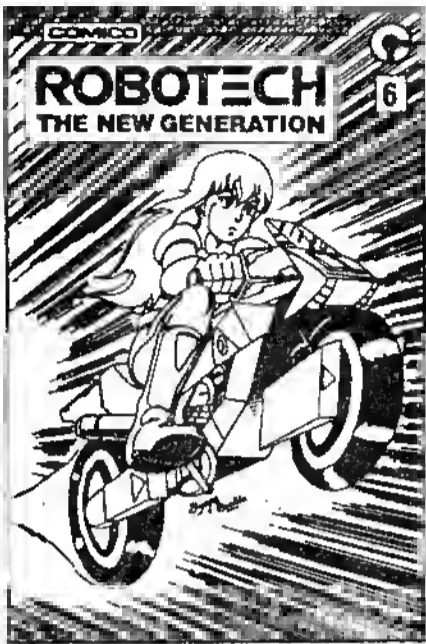
© 1986 Arrow Comics



© 1986 Arrow Comics

- TALES FROM THE ANIVERSE #2**





© 1986 Tatsunoko Productions, Co., Ltd. & Harmony Gold, Inc.

Art/Cover... **Cullins & Patterson**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18; newsstand o/s 4/10]

DC COMICS PRESENTS #95
Superman and Hawkman confront a Thanagarian thrill-killer.
Story... **Isabella & Gold**
Art... **Howell & M. Anderson**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/3]

ELECTRIC WARRIDR #3
The rogue Warrior is targeted for termination.
Story... **Doug Moench**
Art/Cover... **Jim Baikie**
[\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/18]

ELVIRA'S HOUSE OF MYSTERY #5
A rude awakening for Elvira.
Story... **Paul Kupperberg**
Art... **Shawn McManus**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18; newsstand o/s 4/11]

FURY OF FIRESTORM #49
Is Moonbow heroine or villain... and will she stay alive long enough for us to find out?
Story... **Gerry Conway**
Art/Cover... **Brozowski & Machian**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/3]

G.I. COMBAT #284
Hex battles Batman.
Story... **Robert Kanigher**
Art... **Sam Glanzman**
Cover... **Joe Kubert**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18; newsstand o/s 4/10]

HEX #11
Hex battles Batman.
Story... **Michael Fleisher**
Art/Cover... **Texeira & Garzon**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/3]

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #252
Can Batman help the JLA against Despero?
Story... **Gerry Conway**
Art/Cover... **McDonnell & Wray**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/3]

LEGEND OF WONDER WOMAN #3
A daring escape from Atomia's clutches!
Story... **Busiek & Robbins**
Art/Cover... **Trina Robbins**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/3]

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #24
This is the last chance to guess who Sensor Girl really is! (One of the Washington wives, maybe?)
Story... **Paul Levitz**
Art/Cover... **LaRocque & Mahlstedt**
[\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/18]

'MAZING MAN #7
Shea Stadium may never be the same!
Story... **DeStefano & Rozakls**
Art... **DeStefano & Kesel**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18; newsstand o/s 4/11]

THE OUTSIDERS #9
Who is trying to kill Black Lightning's ex-wife?
Story... **Mike W. Barr**
Art/Cover... **Jim Aparo**
[\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/11]

ROOTS OF THE SWAMP THING #1
Re-presenting the classic first two issues.
Story... **Len Wein**
Art/Cover... **Berni Wrightson**
[\$2.00 48-page direct-sales color comic; ships 3/11]

SECRET ORIGINS #4
The explosive past of Firestorm.
Story... **Gerry Conway**
Art... **Tuska & Marcos**
Cover... **Al Milgrom**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18; newsstand o/s 4/11]

SON OF AMBUSH BUG #1
Ambush Bug struggles to provide for his adopted son Cheeks.
Story... **Giffen & Fleming**
Art/Cover... **Giffen & Oksner**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/3]

STAR TREK #28
Dr. McCoy may quit the starfleet for good!
Story... **Diane Duane**
Art... **Gray Morrow**
Cover... **Brozowski & Giordano**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18; newsstand o/s 4/11]

SUPERMAN #421
Superman and Mr. Mxyzptik get trapped in an MTV-like dimension. (Who says DC isn't hip?)
Story... **Cary Bates**
Art... **Swan & Hunt**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/18; newsstand o/s 4/11]

TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS #67
It's super-hero Titans and mythological Titans against the Giants. (Reprinted from Teen Titans #8.)
Story... **Marv Wolfman**

Art... **Garcia Lopez & Tanghal**
[75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/3]

VIGILANTE #31
The Vigilante joins with the mob in order to save New York.
Story... **Paul Kupperberg**
Art... **Patton & Magyar**
[\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/11]

DC GRAPHIC NOVEL

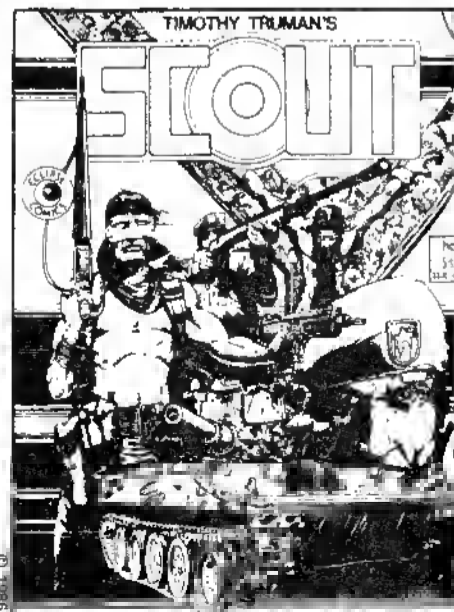
METALZOIC
In the future, robots will rule the Earth!
Story... **Pat Mills**
Art... **Kevin O'Neill**
[\$6.95 direct-sales color graphic novel; ships 3/11]

DELUXE COMICS

WALLY WOOD'S T.H.U.N.-D.E.R. AGENTS #5
A crossover story between Codename: Danger and WWTA as Paul Makor joins the Agents.
Story... **Roger McKenzie**
Art... **Jerry Ordway**
Another episode in the life of Lightning—possibly the last one.
Story... **T. & M. Bierbaum**
Art... **Giffen & Breeding**
The Raven goes to New York to thwart a gang of terrorists who have designs on the New York stock exchange.
Story... **Dann Thomas**
Art... **Perez & McLeod**
Plus the beginning of a two-part Dynamo adventure.
Cover... **George Perez**
[\$2.00 48-page direct-sales color comic; ships in March]

ECLIPSE COMICS

MR. MONSTER #5
"The Demon of Destiny Drive"
A giant flesh-eating amoeba decides to adopt Mr. Monster as its daddy.
Story/Layouts... **Michael T. Gilbert**
Finished Art... **Bill Loeba**
[\$1.75 direct-sales full-color comic; ships 2/11]



PLUS: FASHION IN ACTION



BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC.

P R E S E N T S

NERVOUS REX #3

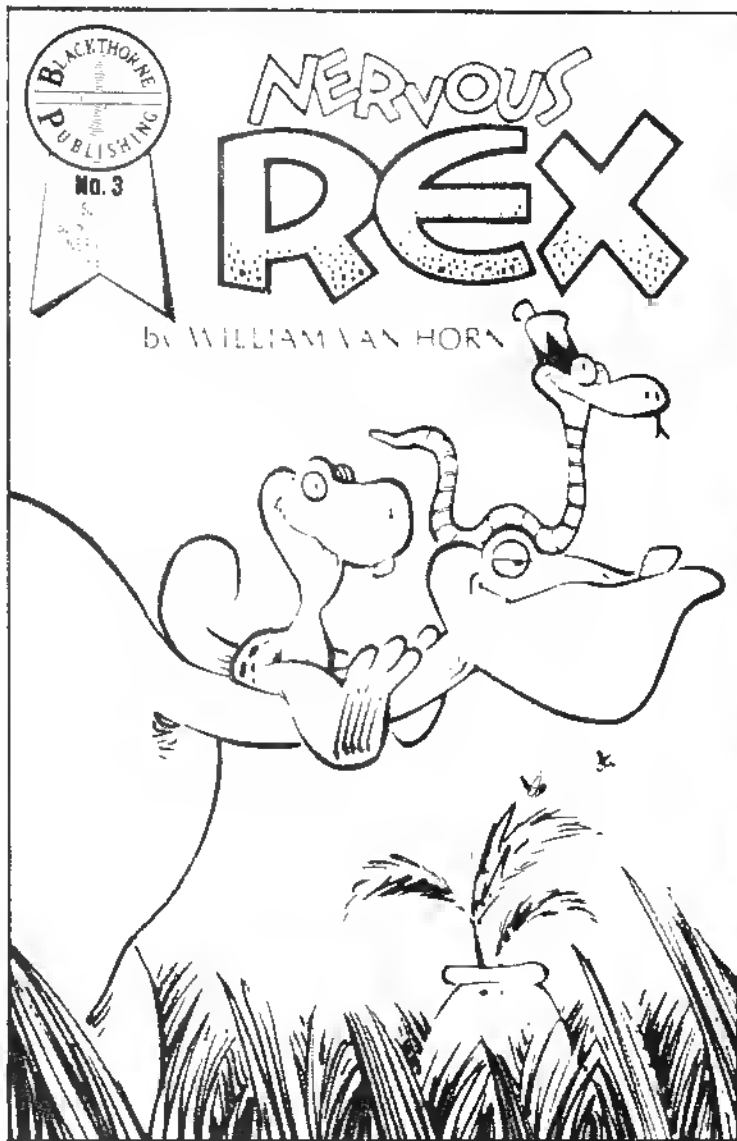
by William Van Horn

In this issue, Rex discovers MAGIC. Magic to control his dominating wife. But "Dearie" catches on and does Rex

one better.

Also in this issue, Rex directs "The Jurassic Players" in a play called, "The King 'n' Me."

Nervous Rex #3, written and drawn by William Van Horn. 32 pages of laughs galore. B&W with full color covers, printed on white stock.



NERVOUS REX #3..... \$2.00

SEND TO: BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC. 786 Blackthorne Avenue, El Cajon, CA 92020

Enclose a check or money order for total, plus 75¢ postage and handling per book ordered. CA residents add 6% sales tax. Checks must clear bank prior to shipping.

* Available Soon. Reserve your copy now!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

- ART OF PIERANGELO BOOG \$8.95
- THE IGER COMIC KINGDOM \$8.95
- BENCHLEY, book 1 \$5.95
- BROOM HILDA, book 1 \$5.95
- DICK TRACY, book 1 \$5.95
- DICK TRACY, book 2 \$5.95
- DICK TRACY, book 3 \$5.95
- DICK TRACY, book 4 \$5.95
- GASOLINE ALLEY, book 1 \$5.95
- LI'L ABNER, book 1 \$5.95

- ANNIE, book 1 \$5.95
- ON STAGE, book 1 \$5.95
- BLONDIE, book 1 \$5.95
- SMOKEY STOVER, book 1 \$5.95
- STAR HAWKS, book 1 \$5.95
- STORIES OF THE WEST, book 1 \$5.95
- STORIES OF THE WEST, book 2 \$5.95
- TALES OF THE GREEN BERET, book 1 \$5.95
- BETTY BOOP, book 1 \$5.95
- KATZENJAMMER KIDS, book 1 \$5.95

IGER CLASSIC FIRST ISSUE REPRINT BOOKS

- SHEENA #1 \$5.95
- NATIONAL COMICS #1 \$5.95
- JUMBO COMICS #1 \$5.95
- WINGS COMICS #1 \$5.95

NEW COMICS

- NERVOUS REX #1 \$2.00
- NERVOUS REX #2 \$2.00
- NERVOUS REX #3 \$2.00
- NERVOUS REX #4 \$2.00
- SHEENA 3-D \$2.00
- MERLINREALM 3-D \$2.25
- 3-D HEROES \$2.25
- GOLDYDYN 3-D \$2.25
- BIZARRE 3-D ZONE \$2.25
- SALIMBA 3-D #1 \$2.50
- SALIMBA 3-D #2 \$2.50

COMING COMICS

SCOUT #5

"Killin' Floor"

Doody's being tortured by government agents, while Scout and his pals invade the Astrodome.

All by.....**Timothy Truman**
Plus "Fashion in Action" by **John K. Snyder III**.

[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/4]

SEOUCTION OF THE INNOCENT #5

More classic stories from **Alex Toth**, **Artie Saaf**, and others.

[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/11]

TALES OF TERROR #5

"Chop Shop"

Story.....**Charles Dixon**

Art.....**Bob Hardin**

"Back Forty"

Story.....**Charles Wagner**

Art.....**Jim Seed**

"Every Home Should Have One"

Story.....**Toren Smith**

Art.**Lela Dowling**

"Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk"

Story.....**Tom Fields**

Art.....**Lee Weeks**

[\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/4]

THE TWISTED TALES OF BRUCE JONES #3

Reprinting classic '60s and '70s tales by **Bruce Jones**, some of which have never been published before.

Cover.....**Bruce Jones**

[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/4]

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

CRITTERS #2

"Birthright, Chapter Two"

Prince Alfon makes a momentous decision

Story/Art/Cover...**Steve Gallacci**

"Captain Jack and His Crew"

Stranded on an alien planet due to a broken Foistboinder.

Story/Art.....**Mike Kazaleh**

"Gnuff: Hello, City Life"

The dragons move in.

Story/Art.....**Freddy Milton**

[\$2.00 black-and-white direct-sales comic; ships 3/7]



© 1986 Steven A. Gallacci

JOURNEY #25

Wolverine MacAlistaire is married.

All by **William Messner-Loebs**
[\$2.00 black-and-white direct-sales comic; ships 3/1]

NEAT STUFF #4

Buddy Bradley pulls a mean trick on his kid brother, Studs Kirby mellows out with cable TV, Girly-Girl gets ostracized, and Junior gets a job.

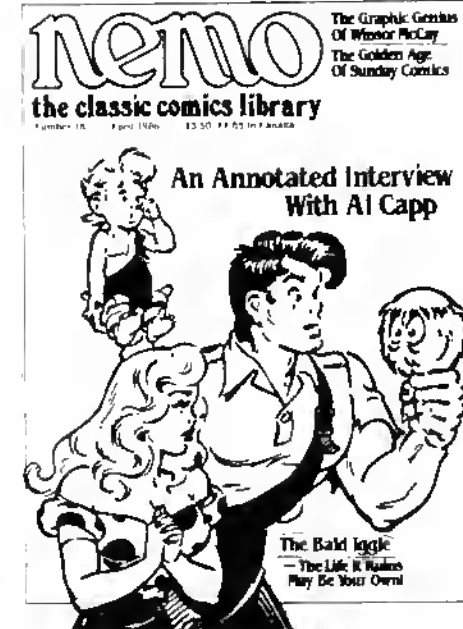
All by.....**Peter Bagge**
[\$2.25 black-and-white direct-sales magazine; ships 3/7]

NEMO: The Classic Comics Library #18

This issue focuses on **Al Capp**, including the classic "Bald Iggle" sequence, as well as an interview with **Capp**. The "Penman of the Past" is **Winsor McCay**.

Cover.....**Al Capp**
[\$3.50 direct-sales black-and-white magazine; ships 3/7]

© 1986 Fantagraphics Books, Inc.



THREAT #2

"Bob Mercenary: Family Ties Part Two"
Bob gets deeper into trouble.

Story.....**Dave Harrison**
Art.....**Jay Geldhof**

"Zone"

Ultra Violent convinces Henry to go in search of Zone.

Story/Art.....**M. Kraiger**

"Enigma Funnies: The Toll"

Problems at a troll bridge.

Story/Art.....**Gary Fields**

"The Holo Bros.: Posse Whipped!!"

The brothers steal a spaceship and make a discovery.

Story/Art/Cover.....**Jim Rohn**
[\$2.25 direct-sales black-and-white magazine; ships 3/14]

FIRST COMICS

ALTER EGO #2

Rob Lindsay finds he must avert a nuclear war.

Story.....**Roy Thomas**
Art/Cover.....**Ron Harris**

[\$1.25 direct-sales Mando color comic; ships 3/7]



THE BAOGER #13

The Badger teams up with Judah the Hammer.

Story.....**Mike Baron**
Art.....**Reinhold & K. Wilson**

Cover.....**Bill Reinhold**

Plus a "Zoomtown" chapter.

Story.....**Mike Baron**
Art.....**Wagner & Martin**

[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships 2/28]

GRIMJACK #24

"Mortal Gods"

Story.....**John Ostrander**
Art/Cover.....**Timothy Truman**

Plus a Munden's Bar story.

Story.....**Steven Grant**
Art.....**Paul Smith**

[\$1.25 direct-sales Mando color comic; ships 3/7]

NEXUS #22

The further adventures of Nexus, Judah, and the Badger in the Bowl-shaped world.

Story.....**Mike Baron**
Art/Cover.....**Giffen & Bryant**

[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/7]

INDEPENDENT

THE OFFICIAL CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS INOEX #1

Everything about the Crisis.

Compiled by....**Murray Ward**
[\$1.75 direct-sales color comic, ships 3/11]

INDEPENDENT COMICS

EPSILON WAVE #IV

"Afterlife"

Nightmare's power explodes, and Arthur Williams is imprisoned.

Story.....**Carl Knappe**
Art/Cover.....**Tom Floyd**

[\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships March]

KITCHEN SINK

MR. NATURAL #3

All by.....**R. Crumb**
[\$2.00 40-page direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships in March]

THE SPIRIT #17

Reprinting four more classic Spirit

COMING COMICS

stories in black-and-white, including "Be-Bop" and "Ev'ry Little Bug"

All by..... **Will Eisner**
 [\$1.95 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships in March]

MARVEL COMICS

ALPHA FLIGHT #36

Guest starring the Avengers, as Snowbird goes into labor.

Story..... **Bill Mantlo**
 Art..... **Roas & Talaoc**
 Cover..... **David Ross**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #278

The final fate of the Wraith.

Story..... **Tom DeFaico**
 Art..... **Mike Harris**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]

CAPTAIN AMERICA #319

The Scourge story continues, as more and more Marvel villains are wiped out!

Story..... **Mark Gruenwald**
 Art..... **Neary & Sinnott**
 Cover..... **Neary & Rubinatein**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]

CLOAK AND DAGGER #7

An issue set in the south of France, as the duo tracks drug dealers.

Story..... **Bill Mantlo**
 Art/Cover..... **Slivestri & Austin**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

CONAN THE KING #35

"The Ravaged Land"

Story..... **Don Kraar**
 Art..... **Hunt & Nichols**
 Cover..... **Hunt & Gil**
 [\$1.25 48-page newsstand color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

DAREDEVIL #232

Nuke is featured.

Story..... **Frank Miller**
 Art/Cover..... **David Mazzuchelli**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

FANTASTIC FOUR INDEX #8

Indexing still even yet more issues.

Editor..... **George Olahevsky**
 [\$1.25 direct-sales Mando color comic; ships 3/11]

NEW MUTANTS #41

A solo story focusing on Danielle Moonstar.

Story..... **Chris Claremont**
 Art..... **Gulce & Wiacek**
 Cover..... **Butch Gulce**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #8

We are now busily plowing through the "M"s.

Text... **Sanderson & Gruenwald**
 Art..... **Various**
 [\$1.50 white-paper comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]

POWER PACK #24

Jakal steals the kids' powers.

Story..... **Louise Simonson**
 Art..... **Bogdanov & Wiacek**
 [75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]



© 1986 Marvel Comics Group

QUESTPROBE #4: THE X-MEN

Starring the X-Men and Magneto.

Story..... **Chris Claremont**
 Art/Cover..... **Brigman & Austln**
 [75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #125

"Altar of the Goat God"

Story..... **Jtm Owsley**
 Art..... **Gary Kwaplsz**
 Cover..... **Michael Golden**
 [\$1.50 black-and-white magazine; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]

SQUADRON SUPREME #11

Nighthawk's Redeemers infiltrate the Squadron.

Story..... **Mark Gruenwald**
 Art..... **Ryan & DeLarosa**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH #10

Quicksilver battles the Inhumans.

Story..... **Steve Englehart**
 Art/Cover..... **Howell & Springer**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #16

Beginning a new direction for the title.

Story..... **David Michelinie**
 Art..... **Silvestri**
 Cover..... **Beauchum & Rubinatein**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

WEST COAST AVENGERS #10

Guest starring the Thing.

Story..... **Steve Englehart**



© 1986 Marvel Comics Group

MARCH 1-15

Art/Cover... **Milgrom & Sinnott**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

MARVEL EPIC COMICS

GROO THE WANDERER #17

All by..... **Sergio Aragonea**
 Not to mention... **Mark Evanler**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/11; newsstand o/s 4/1]

THE ONE #6

In the final issue, The One battles The Other for control of the human race.

All by..... **Flick Velth**
 [\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/11]

SWASHBUCKLERS #7

Raader and the crew are at the mercy of the stowaways.

Story..... **Bill Mantlo**
 Art/Cover..... **Geoff Iaherwood**
 [\$1.50 direct-sales color comic; ships 3/4]

MARVEL STAR COMICS

EWOKS #8

A great clash of supernatural forces, as Logray battles the evil witch Morag for the survival of Endor.

Story..... **Dave Manak**
 Art/Cover..... **Kremer & D'Agostino**
 [75¢ color comic; ships 3/4; newsstand o/s 3/25]

HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE #2

Who or what are the Meteorbs?

Story..... **Mike Cariin**
 Art..... **Wilson & Janke**
 [75¢ newsstand color comic; ships 2/11; newsstand o/s 3/4]

MATRIX GRAPHICS

MACKENZIE QUEEN #5

This issue, the plot degenerates into all-out chaos.

All by..... **Bernie Mireault**
 Cover..... **Steve Bisette**
 [\$1.75 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships in March]

RENEGADE PRESS

REVOLVER #5

Featuring the "Fantastic Fables" series. This issue includes "Crackling Blazer" by **Steve Ditko**, "Tales of the Siberian Snow Troopers" by **Jim Stenstrum**, "Exchange Student," and "Winter Has an Icy Heart." Also, an introductory story by **Steve Bisette**.

Cover..... **Irwin Hasen**
 [\$1.70 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships 3/14]

STRATA #2

"The Air Pirates" Trapped by the Air Pirates, Flambeau must come to grips with his new reality.

Story..... **Joe Judt**
 Art..... **Murtagh & Brozman**
 [\$1.70 direct-sales black-and-white comic; ships 3/14]

NO IDLE

THREAT!

**First DC
issues a
Challenge,
and now
Fantagraphics
Books issues
a Threat!**

A Preview by ED SAMPLE



Growing up, we were always told that comics were a threat to us. We laughed and said it wasn't so, but now Fantagraphics Books proves the theory true by offering up a new comics anthology title which is truly a Threat.

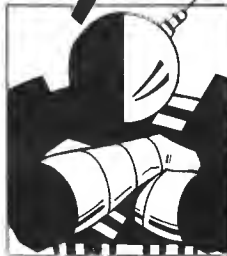
Premiering in February, *Threat* contains four new series from an entity known as Dark Forest Studios. Dark Forest is actually Jim Rohn, Jay Geldhof, Dave Harrison, Michael Kraiger, and Gary Fields, and the Studio referred to is more of an attitude than a formalized work base.

The Proof Is In the Package

The five creators met while attending the Joe Kubert School in the early '80s. Since then, they have stayed in touch with each other, living together or close to one another, as they began embarking on various ideas and development projects. These ideas were slow in coming together, however, as it frequently is for new contributors in the comics field.

On one occasion when they were all living in New Jersey and were having an impromptu get-together, they began throwing out ideas they had for their individual projects. Although these new ideas of theirs didn't fit many established styles or molds, they had a strong conviction that their material was professional and interesting enough to see print. Yet those who had already made the rounds with their ideas were discouraged at best.

It was then that Jay Geldhof came



FEBRUARY 15, 1986

up with a brainstorm. Why not combine the four strips into one marketable package, and send it to the publishers that way? The idea was modeled on Eclipse Comics' *Strange Days*: an anthology title comprising ideas by a group of friends. Hoping that this format would shorten their odds at catching a publisher's eye, they all embraced the idea and began work on the package.

Almost immediately, they decided they would not need four similar, or related, ideas. Some of the series would complement the others, and some wouldn't. The four strips chosen were "Bob Mercenary" by Dave Harrison and Jay Geldhof; "Zone" by Michael Kraiger; "Enigma Funnies," by Gary Fields; and "The Holo Brothers," by Jim Rohn.

Once they had settled on the strips and formats they needed a title for the book. They all drew up a list of names, and then pared down each other's lists until *Threat* emerged as the winner. And an appropriate title it turns out to be: *Threat* could certainly describe the situations that each character would be getting into—their lives are constantly being threatened. Jim Rohn adds that he sees the title as echoing the Flash Gordon-type serials where the viewer gets 20 minutes of action, and is then left with each character threatened. He then has to tune in next week (or month as the case may be).

With the title and strips settled on, copies of *Threat* were prepared and jettisoned into the void in search of the elusive comic book publisher. What would happen next was anyone's guess.

So Where Is the Hard Part?

A few days after being mailed out, the package found its way to the desk of Gary Groth, publisher of Fantagraphics Books. Groth is known not only as a comics purist, but also for having a very discriminating taste for what his company will put out. He receives a host of submissions each month, and to put it mildly, doesn't always like what he sees. When he thumbed through *Threat* he was surprised. Here was a first submission by five unknowns, and yet he saw something he liked. He was impressed by the disparate visions of all five of the creators—each story contained a different point of view and a different approach to comics. For five new creators, Groth says, he felt the package was very strong indeed.

Much to the surprise and delight of the *Threat* team, Gary Groth contacted them one week after their submission went out. To say this result

was welcome is an understatement. Although they eventually also heard from Vortex and Renegade, the deal was cut with Fantagraphics Books, and *Threat* was given a guarantee for 12 issues.

"I felt marketing the four strips together was a good strategy," says Groth, "I'm not sure any of them are strong enough to start a book by themselves at this point. [But] they are unified by an individual point of view, which doesn't look like anything else." Asked if readers might find one or two of the strips to their taste, but refuse to buy the book because they dislike the other two, he replied, "It's a crap shoot. I just hope people will tolerate the other strips and be patient in the development of their lesser favorites."

Groth didn't want to say which series he thought held the most promise, but said each had inherent strengths and weaknesses; all, Groth felt, had the potential to make *Threat* a success.

Another Fantagraphics Books trait is to let creators have a lot of input in the publishing decisions. He let the five creators balance the concept, and make some of those decisions. As an example he suggested alternating only two of the strips on the cover for the first four or six issues, but they were adamant about rotating all four strips on the cover. He also pointed out the commerciality of a comic size book, as opposed to the distinction of a magazine size one. They opted for the magazine size. Groth did not rule out the possibility that the book may be published later in full-color comics format (like *Love and Rockets/Mechanics*) if it proves successful. He also didn't rule out branching off a successful series into its own book, and filling the anthology with another series, but said that ultimately this would be done in conjunction with the creators.

Just a Bubble Head

"Bob Mercenary," the brainchild of Dave Harrison and Jay Geldhof, occupies the cover/opening slot of the first issue. Bob is described as a bionic professional soldier who has turned bounty hunter to appease his creditors.

Harrison developed "Bob Mercenary" as a class project during his first year at the Kubert School, in the fall of 1981. Harrison's original concept, under the working title "Bob the Mercenary," was designed to feature a combination of the Disney "rubber hose" type of drawing and a more realistic, Wally Wood style. The initial response to the character was limited, and Harrison

moved it to the back burner. But he has also shown Bob to his seatmate in class, Jay Geldhof, who decided to play around with the idea on his own. Then, last summer, Geldhof reapproached Harrison with Harrison's original storyline, but utilizing a totally new design. Geldhof had developed the artwork in his own style, and added some supporting characters. Encouraged by this new look, the two creators readied the package to make the rounds of publishers, when the idea to include it in the *Threat* package came about.

As will be developed in the course of the storyline, Bob was a member of the Milky Way Corps, engaged in a war against the Fectoids. His troops were massacred, and he, too, lay near death. This origin, not unlike that of the Lone Ranger, continues as Bob is found, but his human body is so wrecked up in the course of the battle with the Fectoids that he must be rebuilt. The ultimate result is that it is in a decidedly different form; a combination of human body parts and mechanical parts. Both Harrison and Geldhof hint that there are some strange developments with Bob's body which will surprise readers, and these will become apparent as the story progresses.

Initially, the Bob stories will be eight pages in length, as will all of the stories in *Threat*. The first storyline will last six to seven issues, and is entitled, "Family Ties." The title, Harrison says, will leave the reader wondering about Bob's relationships, both spiritual and familial, and will serve as springboards to revelations along the way. The setting is in an unspecified future where Earth has become the primary explorer of the Milky Way galaxy. It has taken the lead in colonizing and discovering many new planets. Here, in a colony called Ousland (named for a mutual friend of Harrison's and Geldhof's), we discover Bob. Ousland was the site of one of the last major battles of the Fectoid war.

As we meet Bob he finds himself unable to outrun a Collection Clone, and in an effort to escape bodily harm he agrees to collect the amount due from another of the agency's clients. This is witnessed by Stan and Floyd who are Bob's chief rivals in the mercenary/hounty hunter business on Ousland. The pair, sort of an Abbott-and-Costello team, continually foul up Bob's life, and are played strictly for humor. Bob's search for his quarry will bring him in touch with the Buffalo Soldiers, headed by Eddie Kingston. They are a group of Rastafarians who originated on Earth. The expansion into outer space saw many rasta colonies spring up, including this one on Ousland. Although they are a peaceful people

RALPH SNARF LOVES HIS NEW POPULARITY

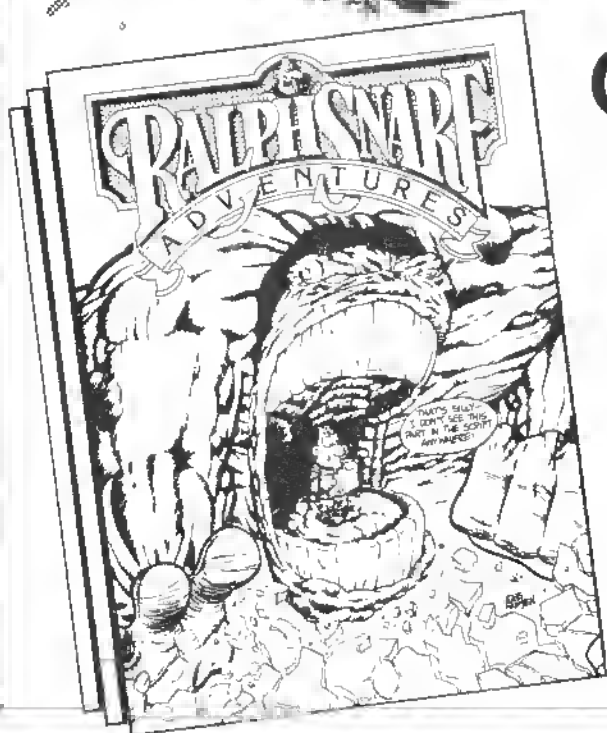


Go Insane!

Follow the witty and outrageous adventures of RALPH SNARF. One day a mild-mannered accountant, the next; a C.P.A. gone mad! RALPH SNARF ADVENTURES,[™] a monthly three issue mini-series, will be available in MAY at a comic shop near you! High quality, b&w comics with full color covers for only \$1.00 from NOW COMICS[™]!!

Escape from your padded cell! Join Ralph and his fantasy other world, this summer!

NOW
COMICS





Bob Mercenary and supporting cast.

they were forced to fight in the war against the Fectoids, and this has affected them.

Although the Fectoids are mentioned, they are not seen initially, and although they will not play an important role for several issues, Harrison hopes to sneak them in so the readers will have a look at them. Another idea that is mentioned in the first issue is an Earth War which will figure prominently in the second storyline. Bob will have to return to Earth to participate in the war in an unexpected way.

Harrison has designed his writing to incorporate some of his personal likes, most noticeably in the first issue his appreciation of the music of Bob Marley. From this he derives the Rastafarian concept, with its hypnotic and spiritual overtones. Although he lives in West Virginia and Geldhof in Missouri they discuss ideas before Harrison sends a completed script to Geldhof for the artwork. Geldhof has designed all of the visuals, and some plot ideas and characters, notably Stan and Floyd. He is incorporating two distinct art styles here, as Bob, Stan and Floyd,

and the Fectoids are all drawn in a humorous, cartoony vein, while such characters as the Buffalo Soldiers are drawn in a very realistic manner.

Both creators see a possibility of a crossover with some of the other titles in *Threat*. "The Holo. Bros." come immediately to mind, and naturally both would like to see the strip become popular enough to branch out into its own book, to broaden the story. "Bob Mercenary" is the first professional comics work for both talents, and should serve as a welcome introduction to them. As to the future besides Bob's story, Jay is being considered to do some inking for Comico on their new *Grendel* book, and Dave has been working on some new material with Ron Wagner, another Kubert school alumnus, and a fill-in penciller for *Hex*.

That Phantom, Zone

Perhaps the strangest series in the *Threat* anthology is "Zone" by Michael Kraiger. "Zone" concerns the mystery surrounding a 7-foot, 400 pound creature who prowls a New

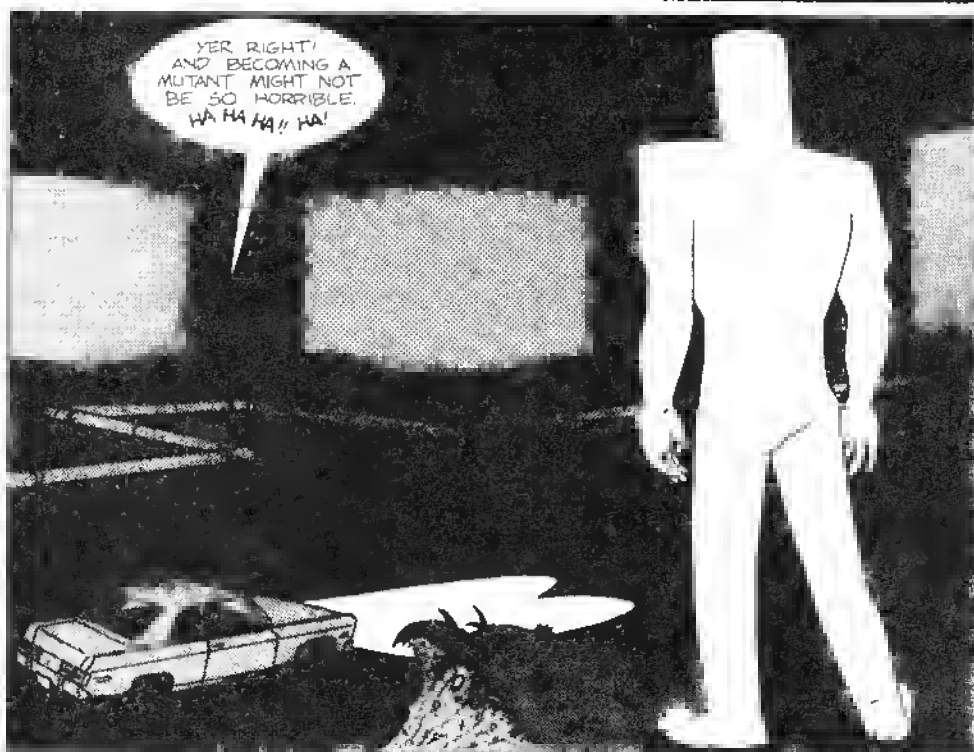
Jersey toxic waste dump. The idea for the title came to Kraiger back in 1978, but it wasn't until 1983 that he had an experience which helped him to visualize where he wanted to go with it.

While driving outside of his hometown of Jersey City, Kraiger chanced upon a picturesque swampland. Upon close inspection he discovered that this site had actually been used as a dumping ground for the toxic wastes of the various nearby factories. Struck by the loss that had occurred here, Kraiger set about the design of the "Zone" series through which he could get his message across. Originally he envisioned it as a one-page monthly strip which would tell a limited story, and get certain ideas across.

He showed it to *Heavy Metal*, but found them not buying much from American creators. *Epic* was searching for more beautiful looking pieces. Unsure of his next avenue Kraiger linked up with his contemporaries from The Kubert School, and from there "Zone" found a home on the *Threat* rotation. As great an idea as this was, Kraiger was faced with another problem. More versed in the artwork end of the creative process, he was admittedly new to writing stories, and now to make "Zone" work in the *Threat* framework he was going to have to change his one page a month story into an eight-pages-per-month ongoing series.

Expanding on his original ideas and incorporating various images, he constructed the first eight-pager for the *Threat* package, which has now resulted in the story in issue #1. In it we were introduced to the reporter Henry, who has experienced a series of nightmares beyond comprehension. These dreams lead him to a marsh outside of Jersey City which has experienced deterioration due to excessive dumping of toxic waste (obviously retracing Kraiger's own pilgrimage at this point). To his horror he is confronted by a giant cylindrical creature. Although nearly paralyzed with fear he is able to snap a picture of the thing, which he later ponders alone in his room. After hours of thought he realizes his only recourse is to turn to his friend, the artist Ultra, whom he feels he can trust. This ends the first story, but forms the basis for the stories to come.

Kraiger made the decision not to reveal the origin of Zone in the first issue. In an earlier incarnation of the character he had originally drafted for Vortex Comics he designed an origin story. He became dissatisfied with the artwork, and did not finish the piece, but he liked the origin sequence, and elements of that original idea are sprinkled in this first issue.



1986 Mike Kraiger

TOP: "Zone."

which Kraiger concedes could be construed as clues to Zone's beginnings. He admits that eventually he will get down to the origin tale which no doubt will be discovered by Henry and Ultra. Also peppered throughout the story are various articles and definitions which serve to bring home Kraiger's feelings about the toxic waste issue. When asked if he will continue to use such heavy handed devices he said no, but the thought will reoccur.

Ahead in "Zone," in #2 Henry explains his revelation to Ultra, and they will return to the swamp to search for the creature. Also in that issue we will be introduced to the Crows, who will be acting the role of a greek chorus, observing the happenings and conveying these occurrences to the readers. In #3 Ultra confronts Zone in an effort to convince him to go to New York with her. Her reasons for doing this are shrouded in mystery. Kraiger says he has not plotted much beyond their trip to New York, but you can expect some unexpected twists along the way.

"Zone" will go much farther than the typical man-goes-into-swamp-and-is-changed story. Somehow that has been done, and this will be vastly different. Kraiger promises the stories will be shown from different characters' points of view, and will blend the reality of their situations with the dreams and nightmares they experience along the way.

"Zone" is very different from the rest of the stories in *Threat*. The other creators agree their strip could cross over, but that "Zone" stands alone. Indeed it does, as it is more bound to today's real world and real problems. Buyers of *Threat* will find themselves reading "Zone" in a different manner than the other series,

and this difference helps heighten the all around appeal of the book.

Holo Tight To Your Dreams

Perhaps the most humorous strip in *Threat* is "The Holo Brothers," the brainchild of Jim Rohn. The three Holo Brothers are small time crooks who are constantly in the wrong situation at the wrong time. Rohn sees the strip as an attitude: a conventional adventure story, but with a tablespoon of sarcasm thrown in. "What I would call Benevolent Anarchy," he says. "When I was searching for my drawing style during my formative training," he explains, "I drew a lot of things in a serious vein, but one thing that caught people's eye was this funny turtle character I had drawn, which lead me to combine the two styles." What we wind up with here is a mix between reptilian and amphibious characters with a '30s feel; serious plots with comical characters, or as Rohn puts it, "Mad-cap mayhem and the whole bit!"

Unlike Mike Kraiger and "Zone" and Gary Fields and "Enigma Funnies" Jim had not had the idea for "The Holo Brothers" running in the back of his mind for the length of time they did. As the *Threat* anthology became clearer though he saw "The Holo Brothers" as a natural. Unlike the other creators, Rohn always envisioned his strip as a serial of eight-page chapters, each with its own mini-plot but part of a bigger whole.

As many comic readers do when they first get a new comic, they skim the stories with the intent of coming back later for a more thorough look. Those people will no doubt find



© 1986 Jim Rohn

ABOVE: "The Holo Bros."

"The Holo Brothers" the easiest to read and get a feel for initially. "I was looking to start a conversation or rapport with the people reading it," says Jim. The pace of the story is designed for action but he has left room for plenty of in-jokes and hidden laughs, details in the background that become more obvious on second and third readings. "Eight pages is enough from the artistic standpoint to tell the story," says Rohn, "but from a writing standpoint the plot fills up so much of the same eight pages I

have to put in the jokes in the art."

The first storyline is plotted over eight issues, and has a working title of "Wheels within Wheels." The first episode is called "Groundwork" and immediately we are introduced to Max, Larry, and Jerry Hologram and their friendly communications mockingbird, Tequila. (Get it?) We learn that they have stolen a sacred jewel, and are in a sleazy bar called "The Striped Ape" to fence it. Here we are introduced to a variety of animalistic types, who speak in cliché accents not unlike the movies of the '40s, which is Rohn's intent. "I pull off old movies as references, and then bring them back through my own style," he points out. As will be the Bros.' lot in life everything goes wrong, and they keep getting involved on a grander scale. Rohn doesn't want to give away too much, but allows that the jewel heist blows up into a political and religious power struggle between the emperor and his assistants, eventually spreading to other planets. The Holo. Brothers will be the cover feature of issue #2.

As to crossovers within the pages of *Threat*, Jim feels that a meeting with Bob Mercenary is a natural, since the strips share similar attitudes. So readers may soon see Bob in the background of a Holo. story, or vice-versa. As has already been revealed, though, with both series eight pages in length, it will be several issues before each ends its first storyline. "The only negative with an eight-page series," says Jim, "is that stories must be streamlined, which puts a crimp in terms of subplots. A sub plot would almost have to be eight pages to get it across, which would disrupt the flow of the main story for a whole issue."

Rohn's artwork, which is reminiscent of the Wally Wood style, is very crisp. He lists as major influences Walt Simonson, and especially Howard Chaykin's *American Flagg!*. Both Chaykin and Simonson are writer/artists, which Rohn feels is the optimum way of working, avoiding the interchangeability of characters and creators which can occur at the big companies.

Killing Me Softly with His Wrench

Imagine Clint Eastwood, in his custom-made role of the no-named Stranger, a Bounty Hunter on a desert planet in the future, seeking out the mutants who would otherwise destroy the way of life of the inhabitants. Imagine this image, then throw in a large measure of biting wit, throw out Clint's physical appearance (sorry female readership), and you are somewhere in the vicinity of



An "Enigma Funnies" cover for *THREAT*.

"Enigma Funnies," the fourth component of *Threat* courtesy of Gary Fields.

"Enigma Funnies" features as its main character a man with no name, a houny hunter who travels a world similar to *The Road Warrior's*. He has a deep-seated hatred for the Mutants who have taken over the planet. (Fields isn't revealing just yet why this hatred exists, but he assures everyone it has nothing to do with the X-Men). "Funnies" is a violent series, but Fields says he is actually poking fun at the violence of the films and stories from which this is spun off.

Originally the series was created as a dig at Mike Kraiger's "Zone." In one of that series' early versions Zone's motto was "Adapt or Be Destroyed." Kraiger was really into the concept so Fields distorted it into his character's "Adapt and Be Destroyed." Now, though Kraiger has abandoned his slogan in "Zone," Fields has made it the banner cry of the mutants in "Funnies."

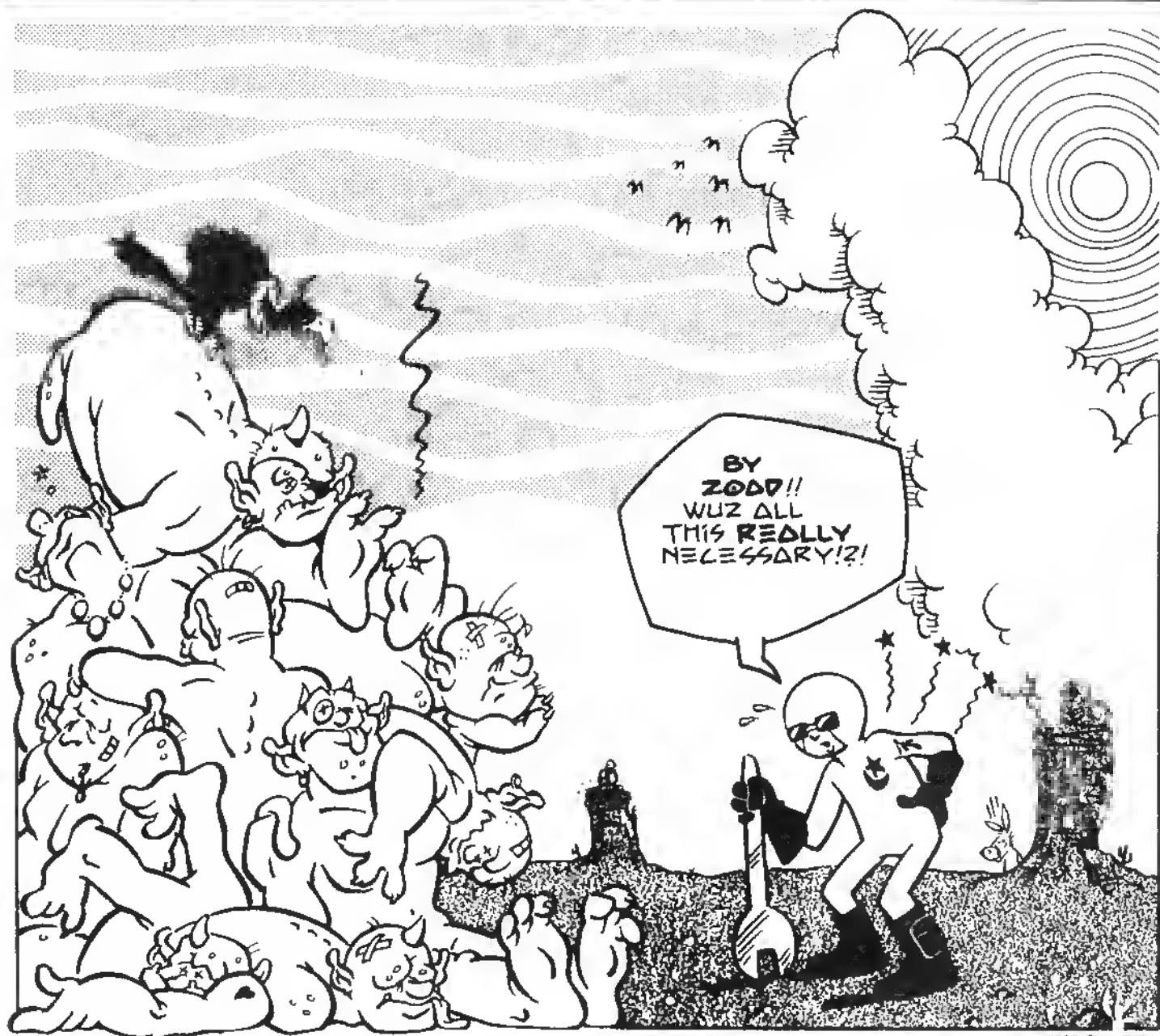
Like "Zone," "Enigma Funnies" was envisioned as a series of one pagers. Fields liked the look and feel of the character, and as various vignettes came to mind he put them down on paper. It wasn't going to be a series, but when the *Threat* idea came around "Funnies" became a part of that package, too.

What the reader then sees in *Threat* #1 are seven one-page (one is actually two pages, so sue me) quickies which will give them a feel for Fields' concept, but absolutely no idea where it is going. Unlike the

other three stories in the anthology, "Enigma Funnies" is not a continued series, at least in its current format. It has no statement to make a la "Zone" save for the conclusions you can draw about violence for violence's sake. What you will find, though, is a large dose of humor. It is different from "The Holo. Brothers" in that the jokes come from the writing, not the artwork (although it is in a humorous style). Fields uses puns and twisting of familiar situations to turn the corners of your mouth into a smile.

Even the stranger's accoutrements come from humorous sources. He uses as his method of destruction a large wrench. When asked where this most unusual weapon of doom came from, Fields unhesitatingly relates his experience as an auto mechanic, and the large, adjustable wrench he utilized every day as a tool of his trade—which has now been translated into the tool of his character's trade.

The loner is detached from everything on this world grown very violent, but doesn't look for trouble. He can be wrong and is not perfect. He appreciates beauty, but don't try to read too much into the components of the stories, because more often than not you'll be wrong. There is no symbolism in the East/West strip; his uniform does not give a hidden clue to an inherent communist loyalty, and his round head does not make him Bob Mercenary's brother. Fields' best advice is to read the series for what is meant to be; a



© 1986 Gary Fields

humorous exercise. Read "Enigma" stories for the jokes, read "Zone" for the message.

Although the strip certainly has its appeal, Fields recognizes for it to be a continuing part of *Threat*, he will need to expand upon the idea. Towards that end we can expect to see longer stories over and above the one pagers. In fact in *Threat* #2 there will be a seven-page story, and a two-issue story in issues #3 and #4. As to what these longer stories will hold, Fields is somewhat cryptic. The stranger may gain a sidekick in an upcoming tale, and we may learn more about his consuming hatred for the mutants. The one-pagers will not disappear entirely, and they will be around to fill in the various page length longer stories. Like Dave Harrison and Jim Rohn, Fields can see the eventual overlapping of their three strips, and goes so far as to say that all three worlds in the strips could be one and the same.

**May I Take That
As a Threat?**

And there you have it—four amazingly diverse series from five creators. Considering the fact that the five cartoonists all had the same formal training, the differences in style and approach are fairly amazing. Although you may find one or two of the series initially stand out for you, there is a lot of appeal in all four strips, and each one has enough in it to be enjoyed individually. As the book progresses, the five creators may make changes, and give and

take on page lengths as the stories rate them. Popular series may be awarded their own books, while *Threat* would continue by adding new stories to the book's rotation.

Being threatened may never have been this much fun!

ED SAMPLE is a regular writer of *Hero Histories* and *Previews* for *Amazing Heroes* and *Amazing Heroes Preview Special*.

**THERE ARE
187 ALIENS IN CONGRESS!**

WHO DID YOU VOTE FOR?

THE SILENT INVASION A Science Fiction Mystery
Coming in April from **Renegade Press**

RIDING SHOTGUN FOR



Trademark of Fantagraphics Books, Inc.

UPSHOT GRAPHICS is a

GRAPHICS

Jan Strnad, writer of *Dalgoda*, *Mutant World*, and *Sword of the Atom*—and now editor of Upshot Graphics—explains why we need another comic book company. . . and exactly what he plans to do with it!

A PREVIEW BY MARK WAID

"What do you mean, 'no more Dalgoda?'"

"That's not what I said, Mark," weaseled Kim Thompson. "I just mean that we're changing the format. Jan Strnad is heading up a new color comics line."

"This isn't another one of those 'Deluxe/Lodestone' deals, is it? Gary having problems with the Feds again? Needs to sell office furniture to himself or something, is that?"

"Call Jan. He'll explain."

So I did. Strnad, writer of *Sword of the Atom* and *Dalgoda*, gentleman that he is, set me straight. Upshot Graphics is a legitimate concern. In the following interview, Amazing Heroes readers will discover the secrets behind this new company, as the editor of Fantagraphics Books' new color comics line fills us in on some of the Upshot releases scheduled for later this year. . . —MW

AH: How about going over the beginnings of Upshot—how and where did it get started?

STRNAD: It got started in my brain. I felt that it was time for Fantagraphics Books to make a high-powered entry into the color comic-book field. In order to do this, it needed an identity, because Fantagraphics Books puts out the widest selection of material of any publisher large or small—so, when people see the name "Fantagraphics Books," it doesn't really mean anything specific to them. It could be anything from *Neat Stuff* to *Prince Valiant*.

And, the color comics field being as crowded as it is, I felt that if we were going to do comics, they would have to be fairly—well, not "mainstream," but certainly action-adventure type of material. There isn't really room for the particularly idiosyncratic, really off-the-wall stuff,

because you as a publisher have to be able to sell so many copies.

That being the case, our color comics would have an identity of their own, which would mean giving them their own imprint. That way, dealers would know, distributors would know, and, most importantly, fans would know when they saw that imprint more or less what they were getting.

Then I had to convince [publishers] Gary [Groth] and Kim [Thompson] to do color comics, because they are a big hassle, very expensive, a big financial risk. They prefer doing black-and-white books—but they agreed to give it a try.

I'm the across-the-line editor for most of Upshot, though Gary may be editing one book that's still under wraps.

AH: When was Upshot officially organized?

STRNAD: I don't think it was ever "officially" organized—we had a meeting sometime around Thanksgiving in which we decided that we would do color comics and that the line would be called Upshot Graphics.

AH: Great name. Who came up with it?

STRNAD: Me. No, actually it kind of came out of conversation. We had lots of names floating around, of course, and that's the one that developed. Having all these different names, we could never get a consensus—so, eventually, we got tired of thinking up names and settled on Upshot.

AH: Which came first, the concept of a color-comics line, or the books that will be published under it?

STRNAD: Both. Two of the projects had been sitting around and we really didn't have a good slot for them, and Upshot turned out to be a way to encompass them. We said, 'Oh, look, if we do form Upshot Graphics, these two projects would fit in very nicely.' Then, after some discussion, we decided to move *Dalgoda* into the Upshot line—because, after all, it fits the "action-adventure" requirement.

AH: Other than the typing of that genre, what else is "standard" across the Upshot line in terms of content or format?

STRNAD: All of the Upshot books will be limited series. There are no continuing books. That's going to affect *Dalgoda* only superficially, because the stories have been breaking down into four parts anyway.

Other than that, we're looking for work that appeals to a slightly older reader—13, 14 on up. We're not doing any super-heroes or kiddie titles. I'm looking for material that doesn't insult an adult reader's intelligence

while it still appeals to the mainstream readership.

AH: Tell me about the individual books.

STRNAD: The first one is going to be *Flesh and Bones*, a four-part *Dalgoda* series. I'm writing it, Dennis Fujitake is illustrating it, and we're going to run as a back-up feature "The Bojeffries Saga," by Alan Moore and Steve Parkhouse. We're acting just as if the regular *Dalgoda* book were continuing. *Dalgoda* #8 is the last issue of the regular irregular title, and from there it's simply moving over into the Upshot division. In fact, there will be more *Dalgoda* printed in 1986 than there was in 1985, so it's not cancelled by any means. That's supposed to come out in June.

After that will come *The Miracle Squad*, by John Wooley and Terry Tidwell. This is a four-part series about a poverty-row movie studio back in 1930s Hollywood. The studio is in trouble, a gangster is trying to take it over, and the studio employees get together to try to stop him. That will come out possibly the same time as *Flesh and Bones*. We have to see what Terry Tidwell's speed is before we schedule it. Right now, he's keeping up with Dennis Fujitake, which is...

AH: ...no mean feat...

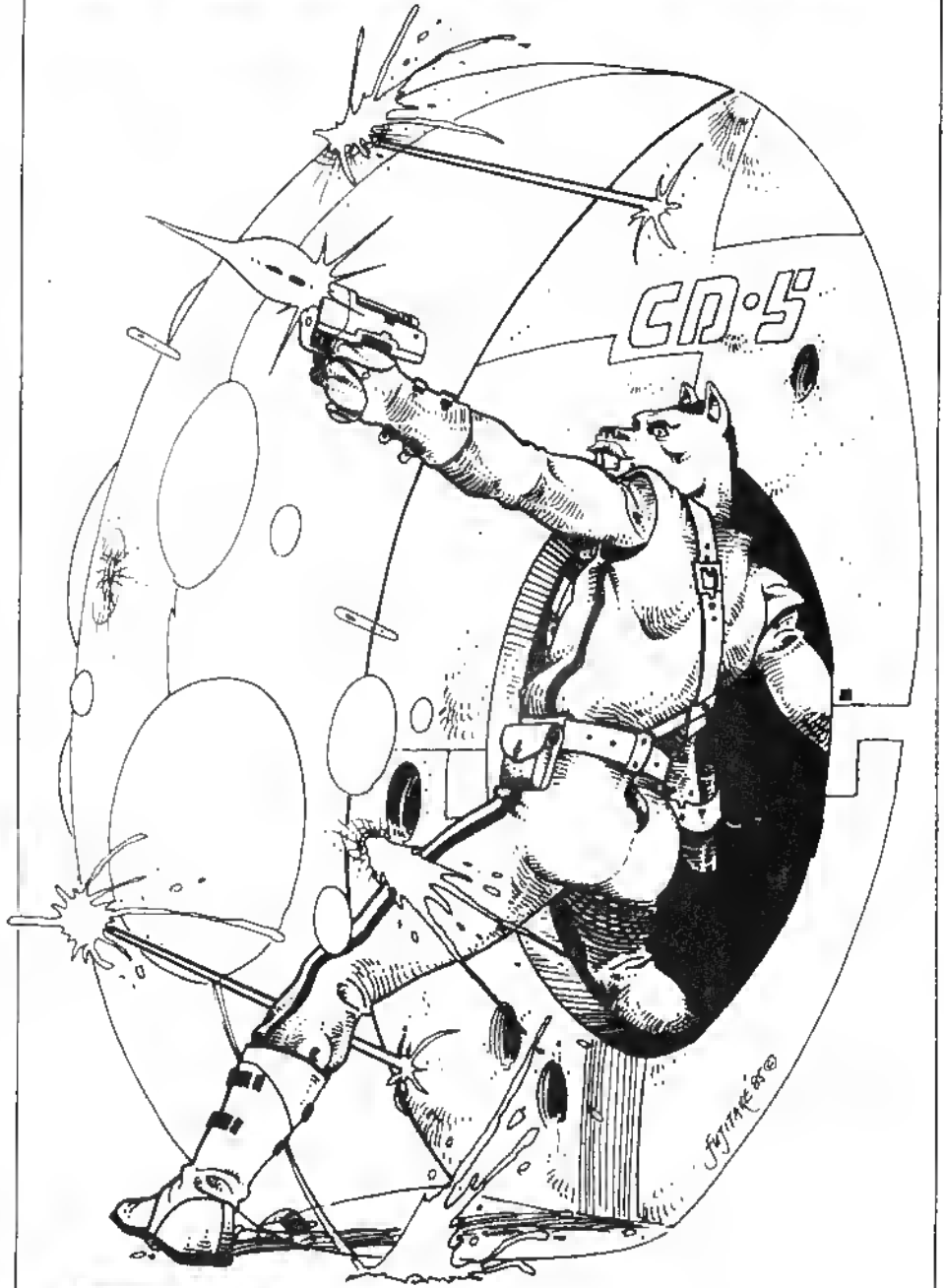
STRNAD: ...kind of like running a race with a one-legged man. It'll come out the same time as *Flesh and Bones*, or very shortly thereafter.

Those are the only two titles that we have definite contracts on. Our third four-part series will probably be *Blood of the Beast*, by me and Steve Parkhouse. I have already written the first book, and Steve is using a style very different from the one he's using on *The Bojeffries Saga*, a more illustrative style. Basically, the way I think about *Blood of the Beast* is as *Call of the Wild* with wolf-people. It's probably the best thing I'm going to write in 1986.

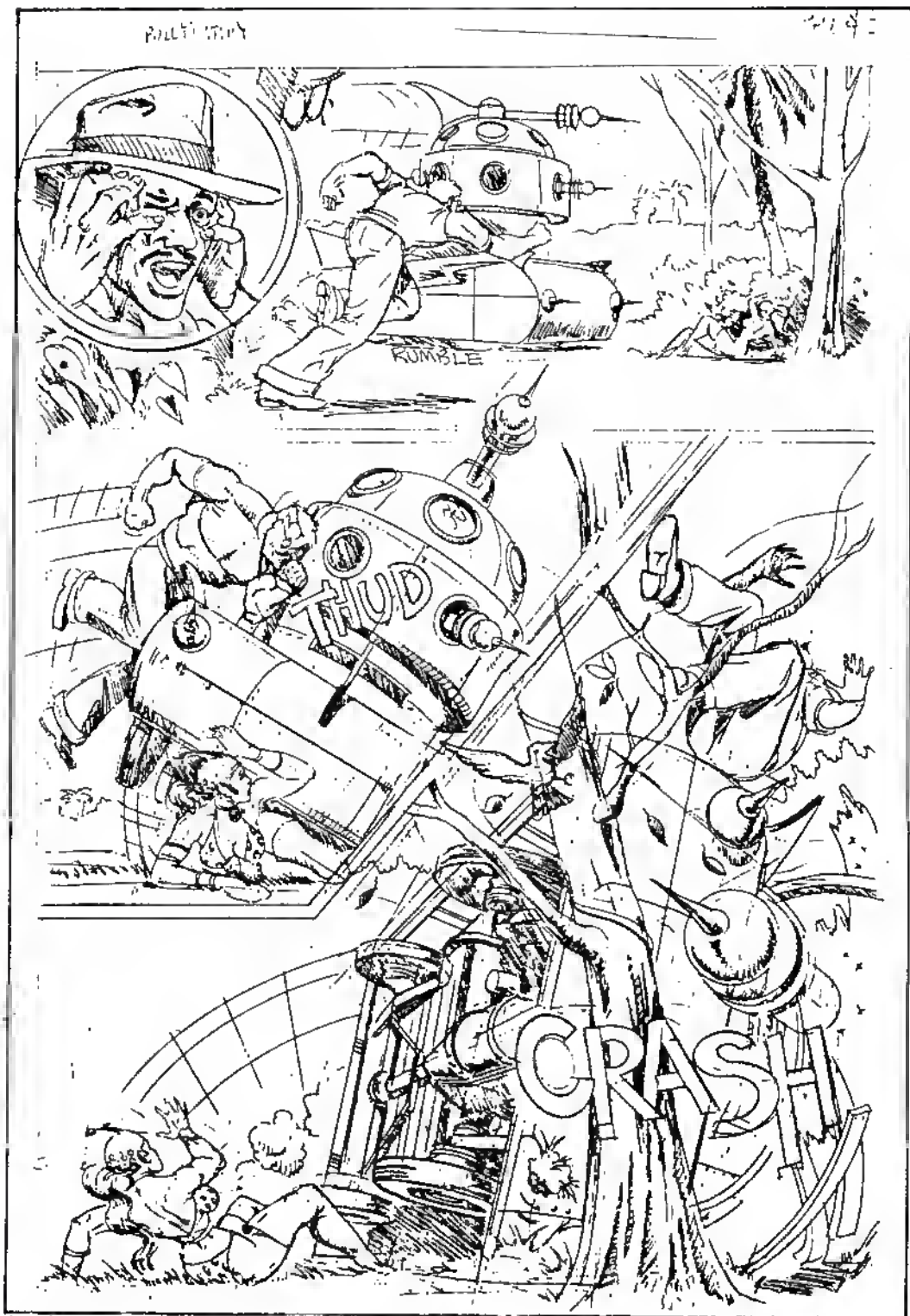
Then there's *Dinosaur Rex*, a three-part series which I'm writing and Henry Mayo is illustrating. Henry has worked mainly in commercial art and movie storyboards. A capsule summary of this one is "P.G. Wodehouse with dinosaurs." It takes place in a fantasy world of the 1920s where the dinosaurs never died out. There's big-game hunters, there's treasure and jungle adventure and mysterious natives. And lots of dinosaurs. And lots of fun. I've been talking with Steve Bissette about doing a back-up feature that would center on one of the main characters, but that's tentative.

Another book that is tentative is *Gunship: Spectre of Death*, which is a forthcoming book by Simon and Schuster written by a Vietnam veteran. It's a very hard-hitting,

Dalgoda

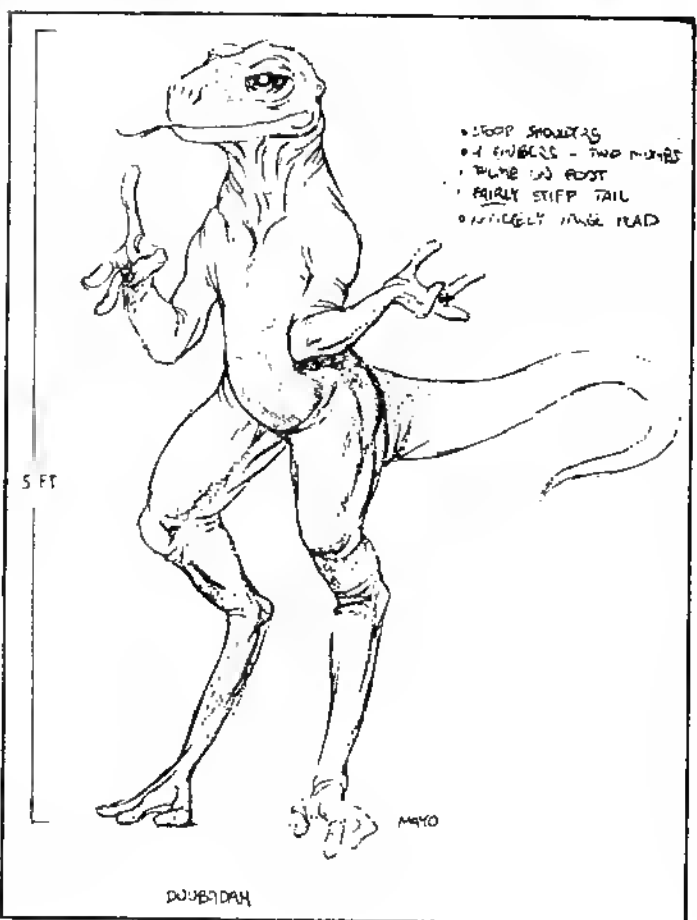


FLESH & BONES



ABOVE: Pencils by Terry Tidwell for THE MIRACLE SQUAD, a series set in '30s Hollywood.

RIGHT: Artist Henry Mayo's rendition of Duubadah, one of the principal characters from DINOSAUR REX, which author Strnad describes as "P.G. Wodehouse with dinosaurs."



© 1986 Hank Mayo

© 1986 Chuck Woolley & Terry Tidwell

realistic view of one part of the war, which centers on the Spectre gunships that bombed trucks along the Ho Chi Minh trail. We're looking at a four-part adaptation, to be written by Richard McEnroe. We don't have an artist scheduled yet. I would like to do it, Gary's given his okay, Richard McEnroe would like to do it, but there's a lot to be worked out yet.

I'd also like to find some way to lure my old friend Richard Corben into the fold. Ideally, I'd write a sequel to *Mutant World*, but now we're probably into the realm of pipe dreams. I'd like to adapt longer works of horror fiction to graphic form. I'd like to adapt some SF and fantasy classics. The possibilities are many.

Anyhow, that gives you an idea of the variety that the Upshot line will show—from *Dinosaur Rex* to *Gunship* demonstrates a pretty wide spectrum, even within this narrow action-adventure genre that we've defined.

AH: What kind of price and physical format are we looking at?

STRNAD: Deluxe format, 32-page \$2.00 books. Right now we're generally planning on 27 pages of story per issue.

As far as frequency goes, that's going to depend on the individual creators. We're going to try, for example, to get *Flesh and Bones* out every month. Since we've never been able to keep even a bi-monthly schedule with *Dalgoda*, though, I'm now stockpiling issues in order to get a hard-start.

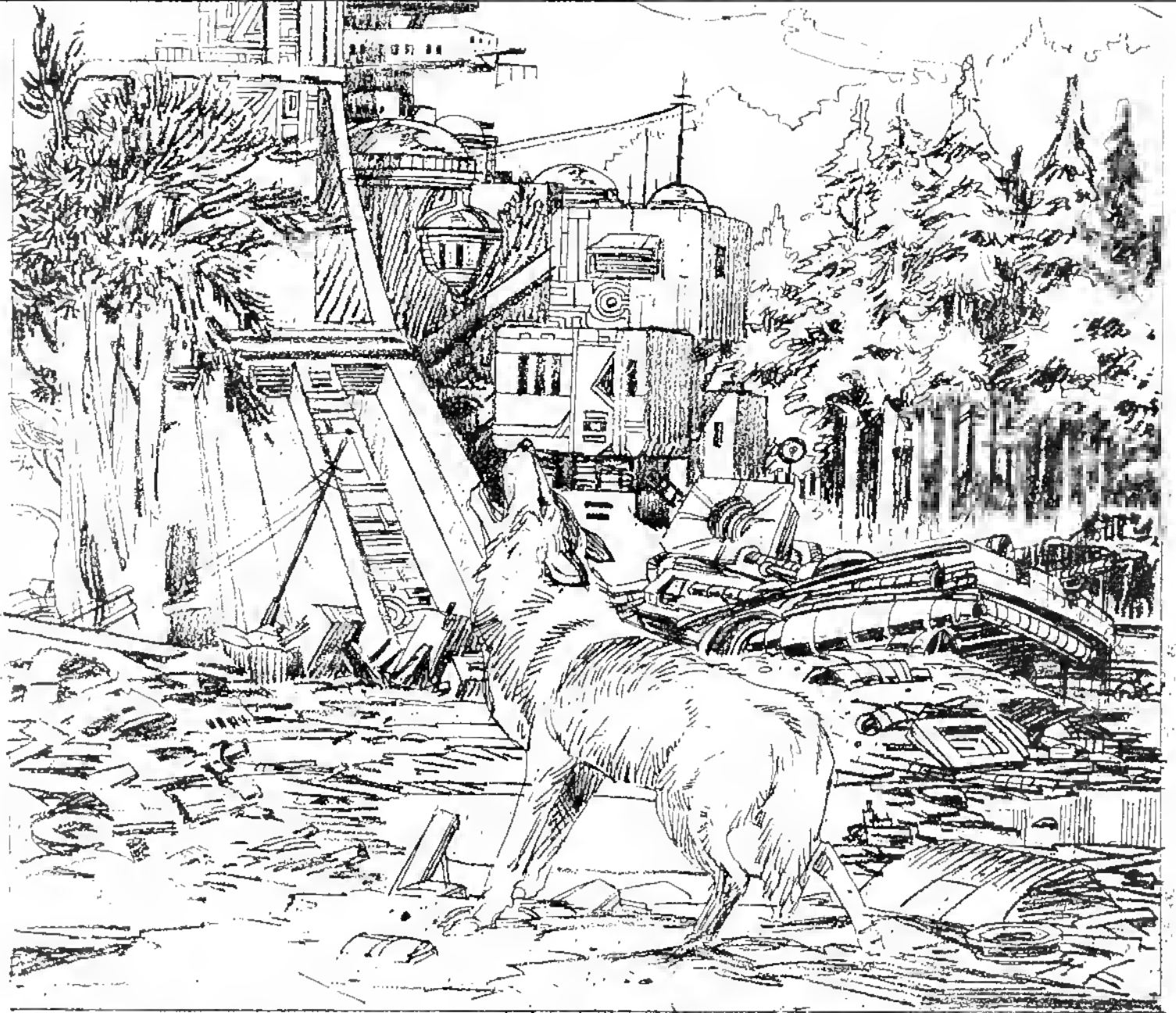
AH: *Fantagraphics' Comics Journal* and *Amazing Heroes* are carried in selected Waldenbooks—is there any chance Upshot books can find a way to join them there?

STRNAD: I hope so. We have talked with people who deal with Waldenbooks about gettings slots in the comics racks or some other display space, but it's very expensive to penetrate that particular market, because you have to buy your shelf space.

AH: What can Jan Strnad, as an editor, bring to a line of comic books?

STRNAD: "His unique vision." I am not a hands-off editor. I work, probably to the point of being a pain in the ass, with the writer and artist who form the material. I have certain things I require from books, such as clarity and characterization. A book has to acknowledge that the reader has some intelligence. I hate books that are written down to the rabble.

I'm not saying that these are "intellectual-type" books—they're still very much comic books and action-adventure, but they're targeted for a slightly higher audience level. The only one so far that would require



© 1986 Jan Strnad & Steve Parkhouse

A pencilled page by Steve Parkhouse from Strnad's *BLOOD OF THE BEAST*—"Call of the Wild with wolf people."

any kind of warning label would be *Gunship*.

AH: I was going to ask you about labelling and self-censorship of the *Upshot* material—whether or not any sort of "mature readers only" labels would be felt necessary.

STRNAD: Most of the books are pretty "clean," and there's not going to be any problems selling them on open shelves. *Gunship*, though, is going to have to be kind of a controlled item. The dealers will want to be very cagey with this one, because it's very realistic. I feel that there's no point in sanitizing the war.

I get a big kick out of *Savage Tales* for its claims versus its realities. [*Journal*] critic] Carter Scholz put his finger on it when he said that *Savage Tales* sports fake chest hair. That's not the case with *Gunship*. The language is very strong, because it reflects the language of the people who were fighting the war, and I don't see any reason to clean it up.

AH: Beyond all this, are there any other long-range plans for *Upshot*?

STRNAD: Since all our titles are limited series, we would like to collect them in book form and market

them that way as items we can keep in print.

AH: If someone came to you with a proposal for an unlimited series

STRNAD: Then I would ask them to structure it as a series of limited series, much the same as *Dalgoda* is a continuing title—once we do *Flesh and Bones*, then we go on to the next limited series. ●

MARK WAID is a man who needs no introduction. He is currently working for *HA!* magazine.

Flying
High
For
Almost
A Half
Century



A HERO HISTORY OF HAWKMAN

TM

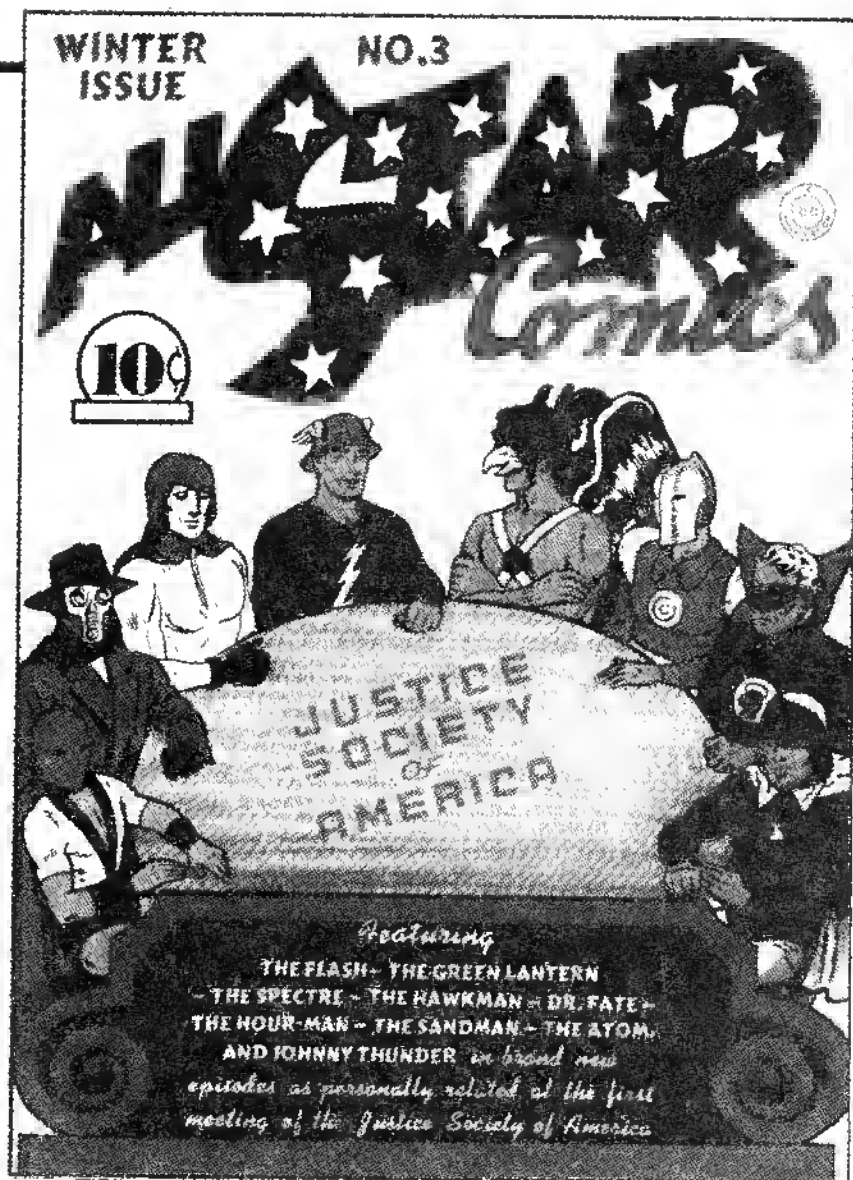
**By
Bill Kropfhauser**

It began, not in some exotic locale, but in the back yard of a writer of comic books. A bird swooped down on a twig to use in its homebuilding and was observed by one Gardner Fox, who wondered, as writers sometimes, do what it would be like if the circumstances of what he'd just witnessed had been different—in this case, if the twig was a crook and the bird was a man with wings. And, being a writer, he used that idle piece of speculation to support two entirely different myths revolving around the concept of a winged hero. He called them both Hawkman.

They were both named Carter Hall when not in costume, and the costumes they wore were remarkably similar: Green pants, red shorts and boots with yellow piping, yellow crossed straps over a bare, muscular chest with the basic job of holding his wings to his back, and a winged cowl that resembled the top of a hawk's head. But the origins and development of the strips were as diverse as possible.

Ninth Metal Magician

The Hawkman of Earth-II, the Hawkman that first appeared in *Flash* #1, drawn by Dennis Neville, was a



The Golden Age Hawkman was one of the founding members of the JSA.

Inc. comes from. He also came across Neptune Perkins, the man forced by birth defects to spend his life submerged in the sea, but who could swim and maneuver with the best fish. His studies and investigations also uncovered oddities such as an ancient tapestry with mystic powers of transportation, and an enchanted urn.

Part of Carter's success was his keen mind, but the other part was his forceful personality, which forged ahead despite dangers or setbacks. His dominant personality was a natural for any leadership post that came along, which is why Hawkman served the longest term as leader of The Justice Society. He commanded respect.

Carter and Shiera also ran into their share of adversaries with super-scientific or supernatural abilities. Their first recurrent foe was The Hummingbird, a vixenish debutant gone wrong who could fly on her own through the use of gossamer-like glider wings. Another early foe was The Monacle, who used a special lens to gather solar radiation and focus it into a laser beam, which he used to avenge himself on some crooked bankers who swindled him out of the family business.

Later foes would include The Raven, The Acrobat, and Simple Simon. However, the adversary most

popular with Hawkman authors and readers was Jim Craddock, The Gentleman Ghost.

"Gentleman" Jim Craddock had been an infamous highwayman in 17th century England who swore even as he swung from a hangman's noose to return and loot those who had condemned him. And return he did, as a disembodied spirit (he claimed), 150 years later. He wore a white tuxedo and cape, top hat, gloves, spats, cane and monocle. The only thing missing was his body, for to all who saw him, The Gentleman Ghost was an animated, headless suit of clothes.

The ever-logical Hawkman, however, didn't believe for a moment that the Ghost was a returned spirit and throughout their several clashes tried to prove the villain's ghostliness was a hoax even as he tried to capture the alleged spirit for crimes committed in this century. Hawkman was always able to provide explanations for the Ghost's seemingly supernatural powers that rang as true as possible; however, the winged detective could never conclusively prove that Craddock was perpetuating a hoax and was really alive, a fact that galled the perfectionist Carter Hall no end. Craddock has, since the '40s, managed to traverse the dimensional barrier and gone on to plague the Hawkman and Batman of Earth-I.

The End of an Era

Midway through 1945, Hawkman went through two changes that would alter the feel of the strip slightly and boost it through the rest of the decade. First, Gardner Fox was joined on writing chores by Bob Kanigher and Kanigher's sense of mystery and the supernatural, which was darker and more serious than Fox's, would add to the air of science and sorcery that surrounded the strip.

The other change was in art. Sheldon Moldoff left DC to go free-lance and was replaced on Hawkman by a young inker named Joe Kubert. Kubert retained Moldoff's dark, shadowy imagery that had added so much to the feel of the strip. What Kubert added was a sense of movement that had escaped Moldoff. Where Moldoff's art was very static and posed, Kubert's figures twisted, arched, and bent with fantastic grace and liveness. Hawkman looked less like Flash Gordon and more like the famous ballet dancer Nijinsky under Kubert. He was still muscular and ruggedly handsome, but he had a new sureness of movement and balance, whether on the ground in the midst of battle or in the air of soaring and diving majestically. The team of Fox, Kanigher and Kubert would, with a few random exceptions, carry the strip to the very end in 1949.

What brought about the end is subject to conjecture. Nineteen forty-nine was a tough year for DC superheroes; it saw the death of one book and the conversion of several others away from the super-hero genre. But Hawkman's waning popularity wasn't helped by the editorial decision a few years prior to change it into a formula super-hero strip, away from the mystic overtones. Hawkman's head mask was replaced by a simple yellow cowl with red wings on his forehead. The fantasy angle was supplanted by straight science fiction or super-villain gimmickry, in line with the other Mayer/Schwartz edited titles of the late '40s. They failed to realize that the aura of science and sorcery running beneath the strip was as crucial an element as his hawk-like mask.

When *Flash Comics* was cancelled in 1949, Hawkman contented himself with leading the Justice Society in *All-Star Comics* for two more years, while Hawkgirl contented herself with retirement. When the JSA retired, at Hawkman's order, rather than reveal their secret identities to the Senate Unamerican Activities Committee, Carter Hall devoted himself to his inventing and his hobby of history and archaeology, a hobby that was taking up more and

tools, the wings (which he changed from metal to, as drawn by Moldoff, a furry substance, confining the anti-gravity metal to his belt), ancient weapons from his collection, and any gadget he happened to be working on, were just aids by provide information or transportation for his keen mind. Even though Batman had the reputation as the world's greatest detective, Hawkman solved as many cases using deductive detection procedures and often seemed smarter than the 40s incarnation of the caped crusader.

Enter a Hawkgirl

Hawkman went about solving mysteries, busting gangsters, exposing hoaxes and battling the supernatural for two years while his friend Shiera Sanders, in whom he was becoming quite romantically interested, watched from the sidelines a situation that didn't please her at all.

Shiera Sanders could be described as the total opposite of her masculine love interest. Where Carter was a man of purpose, Shiera was a creature of impulse. While Carter was conservative and thoughtful, Shira acted first and asked questions later, often with disastrous results. She was physical where Carter was cerebral, and though Carter could also be physical when the need arose, Shiera often found it was far easier to be braver than to be smarter than her intended. On top of that, Carter was a very demanding person and often found Shiera a very beautiful annoyance to his intellectual processes.

One day, in *Flash* #24, Carter went to a masquerade ball as Hawkman and gave Shiera a feminized version (with red tube top in place of the bare chest) of his costume. His one mistake was to give her a working set of wings, because later two birds who were agents of Hawkman flew up to Shiera and beckoned her to follow. Apparently birds are unable to distinguish sex in the human species and they thought she was Hawkman. Hawkman could have corrected the error, since he had learned how to talk to birds, but he wasn't around. Shiera couldn't communicate with them, but true to her impetuous nature she followed them and stumbled across a phony accident scam.

Since she had no experience fighting crime, the logical thing to do would have been to bring Hawkman back and let him handle it. The impetuous thing to do would have been to take the gangsters on, which is just what Shiera did. Naturally she made a mess of things in her inexperience, but luckily for her, Hawk-

man found out about what happened and broke up the racket before Shiera could come to harm. After that, he gruffly repossessed the costume; however, she did prevail upon him to return it and fought at his side for the rest of the strip's run.

The relationship between Carter and Shiera was much like the Sherlock Holmes-Dr. Watson relationship. Carter did love Shiera, but he was very unforgiving of her when she made a mistake or didn't measure up to his standards of intelligence, deductive ability, and conservative behavior. Shiera tolerated that, like Watson did, because she knew he did love her even if he was loathe to admit it. Furthermore, she loved him and she was in awe of his intel-

lectual style of investigation was unsuccessful.

Hawkman, the Scientist and Leader

The focus of a story often revolved around one of Carter's own inventions. Carter Hall in between cases and appearance at society functions, was a genius inventor and research scientist. Over the span of the 40s, Carter developed many unique inventions, such as a radio-controlled missile system and an invisibility serum, in addition to the incredible ninth metal. And, naturally, some enterprising criminal would try to steal it, though just as often one of



From the cover of *FLASH* #85, Joe Kubert's rendition of the Golden Age Hawkman.

lect; and she knew that, though he'd never confess as much, Carter needed her irrepressible nature to brighten up his serious side.

She also was secure about her contribution to the partnership, as her impulsive nature lent itself to fights, where she used fists and not more feminine kicks or chops, and she sometimes yielded the clue Carter needed to solve things when his

Carter's discoveries would lead to an outre adventure of another nature.

It was Carter Hall who discovered how to communicate with birds through his studies in Hawk Valley, a woodland retreat of his where he spent many an exciting adventure. It was Carter Hall who helped discover the hidden Avian world of Feathera in the frozen wastes of Alaska, the world where Northwind of *Infinity*

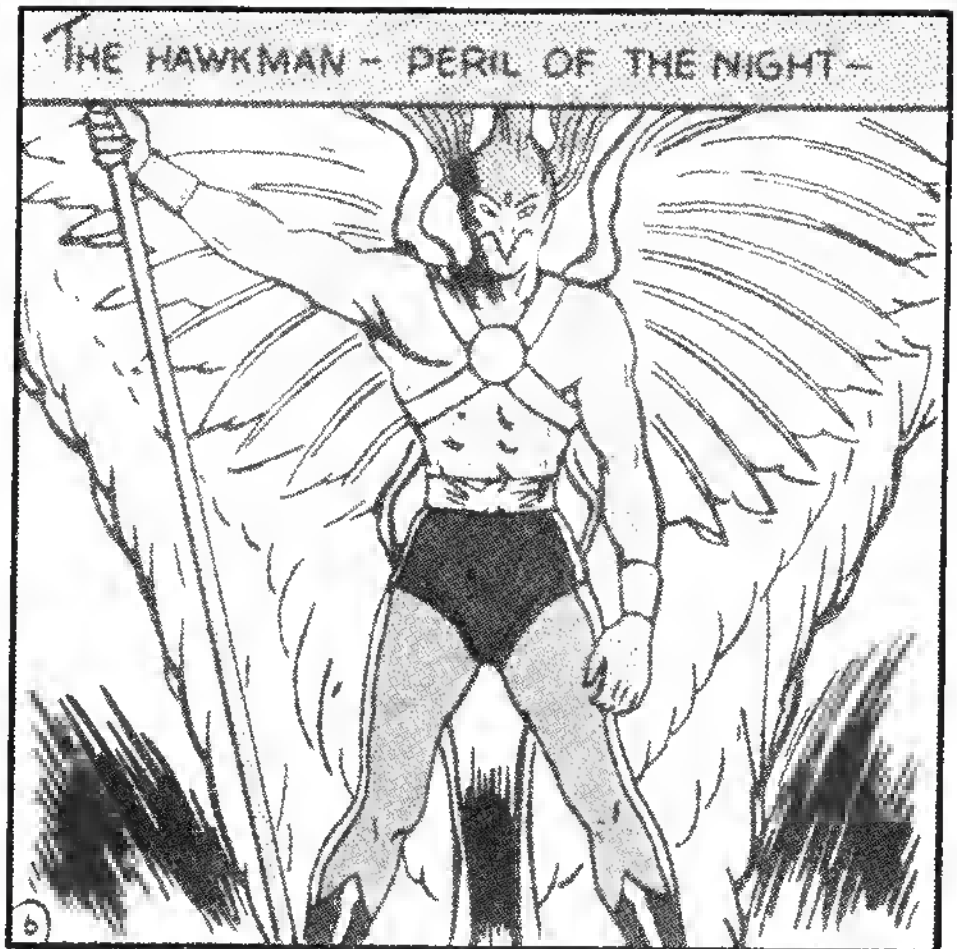
research scientist and wealthy (presumably from the sale of his patents) collector of ancient weaponry. He acquired one piece, an ancient Egyptian sacrificial dagger, and was studying it at his home, when suddenly the dagger began to glow and Carter was soon overcome and began to hallucinate.

He dreamed of a previous life in ancient Egypt, where he was Prince Khufu (though Neville's costumes and sets resembled something closer to Prince Valiant than ancient Egypt; additionally, Khufu was the only blond Egyptian I've ever heard of) and he was battling the evil revolt of Hath-Set, servant of the god Anubis. Hath-Set's forces won the day and Khufu and his betrothed, Shiera, were bound to an altar and sacrificed to Anubis, the Hawk god.

As he died, Khufu issued a blood oath that he and Hath-Set would battle once again and the ending would be different. When Carter woke up, he found himself hard-pressed to dismiss the dream... particularly when he bumped into a woman on the street who was the exact image of Shiera.

They had little time for surprise, because a mysterious force was setting the subways ablaze in blue fire. As they raced to his lab, they compared notes and found that Shiera had experienced the same vision Carter had. Well, no one ever had to hit Carter Hall over the head. Carter donned his familiar uniform for the very first time to battle the man he psychically knew was responsible—Hath-Set, returned in the body of a Professor Hastor.

Dressing up as a "Hawk Man" served two purposes for Carter, who was obsessively practical. It was a slap at Hastor's patron, the Hawk-God Anubis, and it allowed him to use his latest discovery, the fantastic "ninth metal" which defied gravity and could make the wearer weightless. Carter constructed wings of the



The first appearance of Hawkman in costume.

metal so he could both levitate and have some means of propulsion, and set out after Hastor.

Battling to save both the city and Shiera, who had been summoned hypnotically to Hastor's clutches, Hawkman plunged an arrow through Hastor's chest and ended the immediate threat, though we wouldn't find out that Hastor was to survive until *All Star Squadron* #11.

"Flash" Hawkman— or "Sherlock" Hawkman?

That was to serve as a guide to many future Hawkman tales. Fox, sensing the mystical appeal of his

hero's appearance, took a lead from Flash Gordon and wrote stories which combined science fiction and supernatural in the same way the comic strip did. Hawkman himself was a scientist, but barely blinked an eye when faced with mystical menaces, taking them on with as much aplomb as when he battled ordinary gangsters.

The aura of sword, science and sorcery was magnified when the art was assigned a few issues later to Sheldon Moldoff. Moldoff was at the time a heavy user of swipes in his art; borrowing heavily from Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon*, Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant*, and other sources, Moldoff managed to inject Hawkman with the same mythic beauty found in those strips. It may have been a coincidence that both Flash Gordon and Carter Hall were blond, but it was a coincidence Moldoff exploited.

The hero himself was completely unlike any other DC produced at the time. Carter Hall was not a hero first, unlike the others. He was primarily a scientist, who involved himself in adventures as much from curiosity as from a sense of justice. He wasn't grim, but he was extremely serious. He didn't depend on fists, gadgets, or super powers to solve his cases like his contemporaries. He used his brain, trained in the scientific method of observation of extrapolation and honed to record minutiae and hypothesize from there. His

Hawkman makes quick work of his first foe.



more of his attention. Soon he had dropped research and inventing for his archaeological studies and Shiera, finding herself more adept at that science than research and engineering, joined him on the various digs and excursions he made.

Carter tore himself away from his studies once during the '50s, to get married to Shiera, and a few more times in the '60s, to conceive his son, Hector, and revive the Justice Society, since he was still the chair of the group. He juggled his career as a hero with his work in archaeology for ten years before finally hanging up his wings for use only in grave emergencies. Hector now carries on the super-hero tradition of the family as Silver Scarab of *Infinity Inc.*

While Back on Earth...

The year was 1961. On the far distant planet Thanagar, a cunning criminal named Byth had escaped prison, stolen a rocket ship and fled to a backwater world called Earth.

At the same time, in the editorial offices of DC, Julius Schwartz, had finished studying the successful sales reports of his first two Golden Age hero revivals, Flash and Green Lantern, and was preparing to see if he could make it three successes in a row. Who to pick? Why, the next most popular hero from that era not yet revived: Hawkman.

So it came to pass that the top officers of Thanagar's hawk-like uniformed police force were assigned to go to Earth, capture Blyth and return him to Thanagar. There was one problem: Byth could assume the form of any animal native to Thanagar or Earth.

This may have daunted other cops, but Katar and Shayera Hol weren't easily daunted. However, they realized that it might take a while to nab Byth, so with the help of Midway City's police commissioner, George Emmett, they set themselves up as Carter and Shiera Hall, the new resident directors of the city's museum of natural history.

How would aliens know enough about Earth natural history to do a credible job? The same way they knew how to speak English and all bird languages: The Halls possessed a Thanagarian device called an absorbascon, which could electronically absorb all knowledge know on Earth and feed it into the brains of the two officers.

Using the ancient weapons found in the museum, as well as their anti-gravity belts, wings for propulsion, and their inborn ingenuity, Hawkman and Hawkgirl tracked down Byth and sent him packing for Thanagar. Their mission finished,

they requested and were granted permission to stay on Earth in their disguises of the Halls and study police methods on Earth. That all occurred in *Brave & The Bold* #34.

The creative team on Hawkman was again Gardner Fox and Joe Kubert. Whenever possible, Editor Schwartz tried to return the '40s creative team with the return of the revamped character. Flash's first story had been by Bob Kanigher and Carmine Infantino, the creative team on his last few adventures in the '40s. *Green Lantern* was written by John Broome, the author of roughly half of his stories for the last three years of his first run. And the Justice League, successor to the Justice Society, was also scripted by long-time JSA writer Gardner Fox.

Additionally, the uniforms were basically the same as the '40s characters they were based on. Only a few changes, such as Hawkgirl changing the red tube top into a yellow tank top and Hawkman's hawk's head cowl losing the wings for the first few issues, were done. The strip looked nearly the same as the old version, taking into account Kubert's maturity as an artist.

Space Family Hol

But Julius Schwartz didn't believe in just reviving an old strip, but in improving and updating it as well. The names and costumes may have been the same, but the characters and mood were totally different. For one thing, the mystical end of the Hawkman was abandoned again. Where Earth-II's Hawkman was a reincarnated prince, this Hawkman was an alien from another planet—sorcery and supernaturalism versus pure science fiction.

The characters were different, too. Where the old Carter was a scientist and inventor who dabbled in investigation, the new Katar was a criminal investigator who dabbled in science. Carter's hobby was Katar's job. Their investigative techniques differed, too. Katar leaned to proven police methods of criminal tendencies and methods of operation, gathering evidence for use against the perpetrator, and using scientific gadgetry as well as the logical mind to gather clues and track suspects.

Even their personalities differed. Carter was a serious, sharp-tongued, unforgiving taskmaster while Katar was very even-tempered and gentle, quiet and introspective. While Carter was critical and rarely appreciative of Shiera, Katar was almost obsessively protective of Shayera, though she had managed to prove over and over that she could handle her duties as a police officer in moments of stress.



Shiera and Shayera were different also. Shayera wasn't the least bit of impulsive or reckless. Where Shiera was an untrained amateur, feeling her way along by Carter's side, Shayera was a seasoned veteran officer, schooled in detection and apprehension/self-defense skills. Shayera was logical, courageous, and sensible to a fault, as well as terribly devoted to her work and her husband. She also had a mischievous side to substitute for Shiera's belligerent wit, and was continually challenging or jabbing her retiring husband playfully as to who was the best cop or which planet had the better detection methods. Katar usually proved to be the better deductive mind, like his Earth-II counterpart, and that would lead to Shayera's chief character flaw.

Shayera had, since they had first met, been in awe of Katar and his position as the first and greatest cop in Thanagarian history, and she felt a subconscious need to prove herself worthy of him as a partner and as a wife. Periodically, the need would flare up and she would strike out on her own, either in costume or in disguise and attempt to solve a case on her own. Sometimes she would succeed, for unlike her Earth-II counterpart, Shayera was not a flighty debutante, but a respectable law enforcement officer in her own right. Sometimes, though, she would fail and Hawkman would have to help her.

It caused some minor problems between the couple, but it wasn't a grave threat. In fact, Katar and Shayera Hol had and have the most stable marriage in the history of comics. Shayera is totally devoted to her husband. Katar, for all his honors and accomplishments as a member of the Hawk police, only gets upset when his link with his wife is broken or even threatened. The man has, more than mere love, an emotional dependence on Shayera. She seems

**OUR FUTURE'S ONLY HOPE...
IS HERE TODAY**

BLACKMOON™



COMING SOON!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

US COMICS

*107 E. LANCASTER AVENUE, WAYNE, PA 19087
(215) 688-5166*

BLACKMOON © 1985 By James C. Hallett



**SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE—NEW COMICS
OLD COMICS—MAGAZINES—GRAPHIC NOVELS
POSTERS—T-SHIRTS**

**107 E. LANCASTER AVENUE, WAYNE, PA 19087
(215) 688-5166**

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

THE SOUTHERN KNIGHTS GRAPHIC NOVEL

**ALL ART BY
JACKSON
(BUTCH)
GUICE**
ARTIST OF MARVEL'S
X-FACTOR!

*"One of the best super-group
comics being published today—
certainly one of the top five."*
—Don Thompson
COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE



The original
SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #1
(called **THE CRUSADERS**)
currently sells for
upwards of \$10.—if you
can find it. Now the first
two novel-length hard-to-
find black-and-white
issues are collected in
one graphic novel!

**FULL COLOR COVER
by JACKSON GUICE!**

But that's not all. This
high-quality collector's
edition includes pin-ups
and extras about the #1
SUPERTEAM of the South

Superior reproduction on
fine quality, heavy grade
paper stock

A fullsize graphic novel
you can display proudly
on your shelves alongside
other fine Marvel, DC and
First Graphic Novels

(c) 1986 The Guild/Fictioneer Books Ltd.

**SHIPPING IN SPRING FOR SUMMER SALES & CONVENTIONS!
ALL FOR ONLY \$4.95**

(Canada: \$6.25)

**COMICS
INTERVIEW**
PUBLICATION

FICTIONEER BOOKS, LTD. • 234 FIFTH AVE. • SUITE 301-G • NEW YORK, NY 10001



to be the greatest joy in his life and one could suspect that his role as a police officer is a less than fulfilling life for Katar, performed more as a duty and a moral requirement than as an avocation of choice.

Star Wars Vs. the Mummy

The strip, too, was different in its purely scientific bent. Even when potentially mystic menaces, which seemed to follow the archaeological world just at its perimeter in comics and which they in their roles as museum directors had to deal with, did appear, there was a scientific or rational explanation for them. When there wasn't one, the Hawks still dealt with it in a purely scientific manner. As an element of the feature, magic and mysticism never seemed to take hold of the new, super-scientific Hawkman.

That mood of science fiction over supernatural was strengthened by a change of artists. Joe Kubert's art, as it did in the '40s, walked the line between SF and sorcery in mood, but when Hawkman won a regular spot in *Mystery In Space*, Kubert had to

beg off due to prior commitments with Bob Kanigher's war titles. His replacement was science fiction artist Murphy Anderson, who had made his rep at drawing SF stories primarily in *Strange Adventures* and inking Hawkman's co-feature, Adam Strange. Kubert's heavy shading and cinematic layouts were replaced by sleek line shading and linear, almost earthbound layouts. Hawkman still looked very good, but he was now completely divorced from the '40s concept.

An Alien's Best Friends . . . And Foes

The Hawkman of the '40s had very few friends. He had many fond acquaintances and fighting comrades, and was universally respected by everyone. But he was not an easy person to develop a truly deep friendship with anyone. His JSA comrades came closest to being his best friends, but even with them it was more respect and admiration than deep emotional feelings.

Katar Hol, the Hawkman of today, had much the same problem, but for

different reasons. He was a good man and an easy-going person, nice and pleasant to be around—but he was and is different. He is an alien being from another planet, with a different background and ways and everything. People could like him, respect him, value him as a friend and partner, but not everyone could make a commitment to an alien being. Not even Superman, who is as much an alien as Hawkman, and such problems, because Superman had the benefit in this instance of being raised as a human. Hawkman was different in small ways because he knew no other way.

But he did manage to win over more people than his Earth-II counterpart did. Commissioner Emmett was for years a close friend and trusted confidant to Katar and his wife. Emmett was a man who accepted Katar from the start, despite his strange mannerisms and even stranger appearance. Emmett was the first to really befriend the lonely aliens. But he wasn't the last.

The Matter Master had been the first Earth villain the Hawks had gone up against. A scientist who discovered the process of bending the elements of physics and chemistry to his will with the element Mentachem, but had been defeated twice, once by the Hawks and once by the Atom, who even succeeded in confiscating his matter control rod. But when Matter Master was able to recover his rod, no jail could hold him, and he returned to hiding long enough to plan a trap for the Justice League, should they come after him, and a special trap for the Hawks.

Using a robbery the Hawks easily overcame to lure them to his cavern hideout, and threw the ensuing struggle with them. When the control rod was seized by Hawkgirl, a delayed mental command from Matter Master melted a human-sized diamond in the cavern, which reformed around the Hawks. Once trapped inside, Matter Master ordered the diamond to shrink and crush the officers within.

But the Hawks shrank with the diamond, as much to their surprise as Matter Master's. Shrank down to a sub-atomic world, the pair broke free of their diamond prison and helped overthrow the tyrant ruler of their temporary home. After that, they reentered the jewel, feeling Matter Master would want a memento, and during their ride back, Hawkman deduced that the mentachem rod had gained the power to alter the sizes of living beings from contact with The Atom's costume, which is made of material from the same white dwarf star Atom gained his powers from.

Halted at a height of two inches,

The Hawks still managed to overcome Matter Master with the element of surprise, their anti-grav belts, and a large rock. Since Matter Master was the only person the rod would operate for, The Hawks went to Earth's resident size expert to restore themselves to the proper height. The Atom was only too happy to comply with the couple he had met and with whom he had fought side by side within his own magazine.

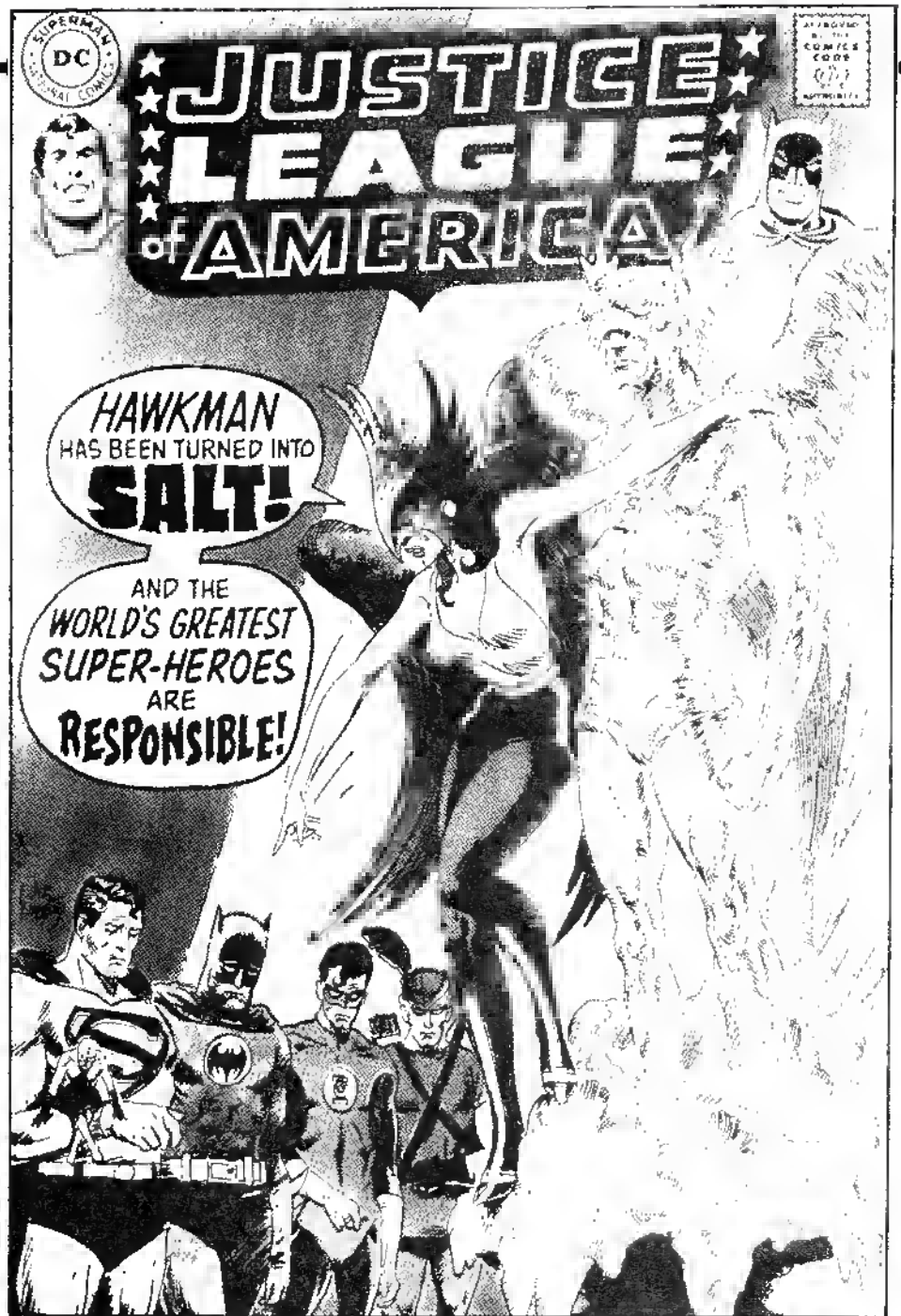
The Atom became Hawkman's closest friend on Earth, but it's difficult to understand why. They have almost nothing in common except their Justice League work. Ray Palmer was basically a research scientist, friendly enough, but with no more than a passing interest in police work, space travel or archaeology, the things Hawkman was most familiar with; likewise, Hawkman had nothing more than a superficial interest in physics, history or anything else that interested Ray.

And yet, Carter and Ray developed a quick and deep friendship with each other. They teamed up several more times over their respective runs and eventually merged together into one book. Each supported the other in times of crisis and rarely spoke a cross word to the other.

Hawkman was also good friends with Adam Strange. Now, with Adam, Hawkman had at least one common thread: Adam understood being an alien on a strange world, as he was the only Earth man on the planet Rann. They first teamed in *Mystery In Space* #90, a natural pairing since they were sharing the title at the time. Both their worlds, Thanagar and Rann, were being threatened by an extra-terrestrial menace and they teamed up to defeat the threat. From that point on, Adam Strange and Hawkman were friends.

But theirs was not as close a relationship as was his friendship with the Atom. In some ways, Adam and Hawkman were too much alike. They were both men of action during crisis and used to solving the cases themselves, to being the decisive factor. Adam Strange was the greatest hero of Rann, but next to Hawkman he was second best.

The other person Hawkman was closest to make a person wonder why. When Green Arrow lost his fortune in the late '60s, he developed a very loud anti-establishment manner of thinking and would lash out at anyone and anything that even smacked peripherally of "THE ESTABLISHMENT." Of course, Hawkman's training as a police officer evoked just such an "ESTABLISHMENT" image and soon Green Arrow was lashing out at Hawkman during the cases they shared with the Justice



League, using every ounce of his infamous sarcastic wit he could muster.

When confronted with an onslaught such as that, most people would withdraw or lash back. Hawkman, ever perceptive, did neither. He had known Green Arrow for years as a fellow member of the JLA and he knew the man liked him. It was hard for anyone to get Green Arrow to admit it, but he did like Hawkman as a person. He was the only lashing out at the job Hawkman did and not the man himself and Hawkman realized this if no one else did.

So Hawkman merely stood by and accepted the barbs and taunts graciously and tolerantly, occasionally returning a volley with a mild barb of his own, to keep Green Arrow humble.

During the '70s, Green Arrow caused Hawkman almost as much grief as his most famous foe, The Shadow Thief—almost.

Carl Sands was a common thief who was presented with a device called a dimensiometer by a grateful alien whose life Sands had saved. The device allowed Sands to enter another dimension which was a geographical duplicate of Earth. In

our dimension, he was replaced by a shadow outline which could affect things in our dimension, but could not be affected by anything.

Naturally, Sands was overjoyed by this and quickly set about on a one-man crime wave against Midway City. Nothing the police threw against The Shadow Thief did any good, and the weaponry of Hawkman and Hawkgirl, whether advanced Thanagarian in design or ancient Earth in origin, did little better.

Stymied in that point of attack, Hawkman set his highly trained and creative mind to the problem. First he used scientific police detection to learn The Shadow Thief's identity. Then the Hawks laid in wait for Sands at his trailer and when he entered it, they lifted it high into the air with the aid of their anti-gravity belts. When Sands walked through the wall of the trailer, as he loved to do, he stepped out into space and began freefalling towards Earth, as his real body was just as far off the ground in the other dimension as his shadow was here and there gravity could affect him.

The Hawks offered to save him if he turned loose of the dimensio-



meter, which Carl hastily agreed to do. He was carted off to jail and just in time. The Dimensioner affected the magnetic fields of Earth and prolonged use of it could trigger a new ice age on the North American continent, a prophecy that came true in an issue of *Justice League* before the JLA put a halt to it.

Other adversaries were Ira Quimby and his super-scientific gadgetry for crime, and C.A.W., an organized crime operation that also tended towards gadgetry to pursue its ends. Most other stories revolved around perils brought about from artifacts bought or found for the museum and the various curses attached to them, the angry natives wanting them back, or the crooks trying to steal them. The best example of this genre was in "Master Of The Sky Weapons," in which the Hawks went to the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico to investigate what had caused the group amnesia of the archaeologists digging there.

Their investigation revealed an ancient and immortal Mayan called Chac, who possessed vast scientific knowledge and gadgetry he had obtained from (much like The Shadow Thief) a visiting alien being. The superstitious Mayans of centuries ago overpowered Chac and subjected him to amnesia-inducing mists, condemning him to wander through Mexico for centuries with no knowledge of who he was or what wonders he could accomplish.

It was only when the archaeologists began to explore his ancient temple of Tikal with him along as a guide did the spell of forgetfulness life. Reclaiming his power and position, he hid the scientists away under a similar spell.

After capturing the Hawks, Chac tried to learn how they were able to fly. That reprieve from amnesiac dismissal gave Hawkman the time to escape Chac's clutches and, in a physical confrontation, the ancient Mayan despot was no match for Hawkman's fists. With Chac imprisoned, an antidote for the mists of forgetfulness was found and the scientists were restored.



An Invader's Favorite Tour Stop

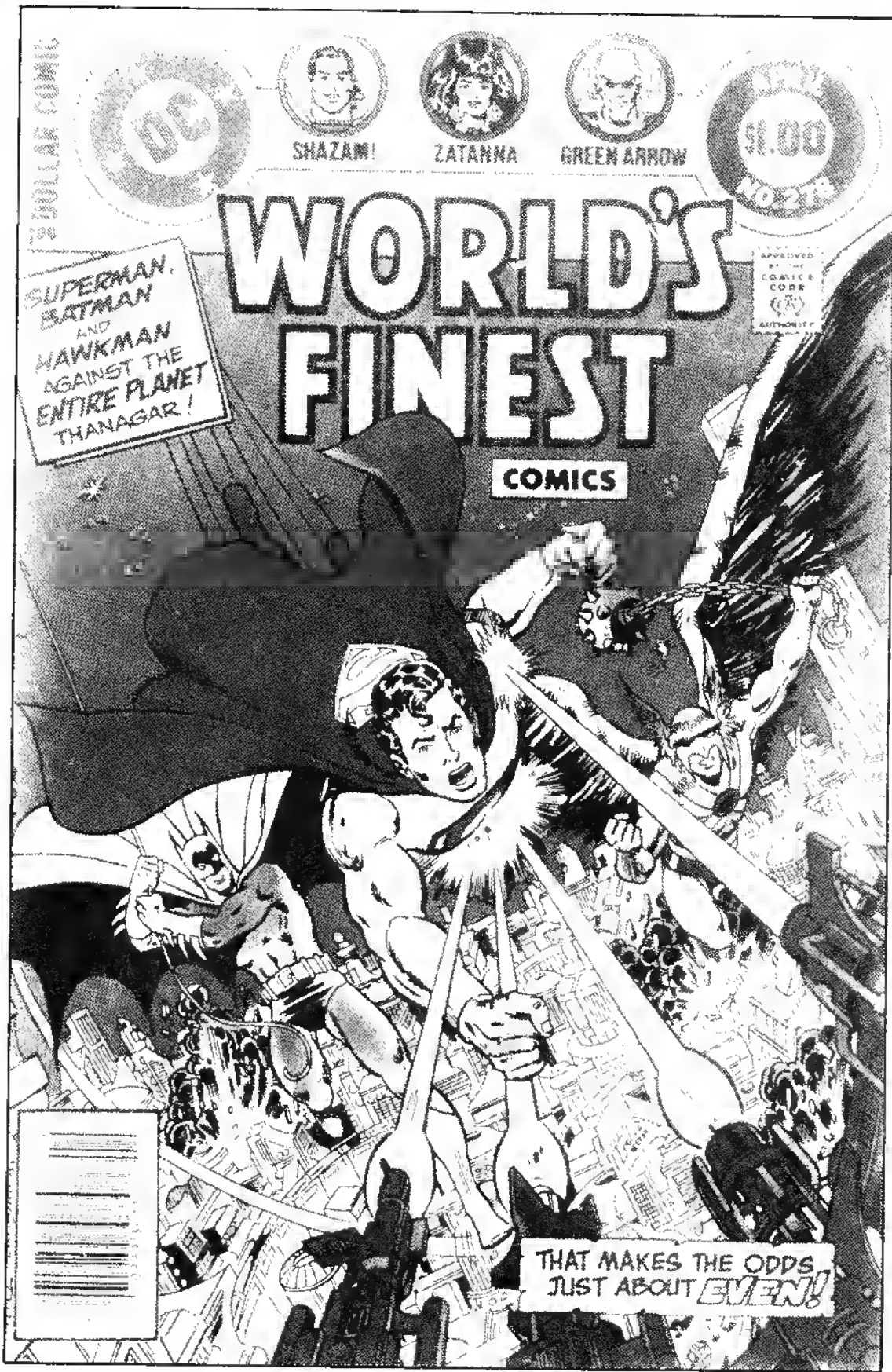
Along with our own Earth and Adam Strange's world of Rann, Thanagar was the most attacked, most invaded, most imperiled planet in the known universe. They were first attacked when Katar was a young man assisting his ornithologist father. Intelligent

hawks from another world who wore human head masks that allowed them to fire lasers from their eyes invaded Thanagar.

The Man Hawks, as they were dubbed, began looting the planet of all of its valuables. Only the courage of Katar Hol and the inventiveness of the planet's scientists stopped the menace. Katar was outfitted with a hawk head cowl to protect him from the eye beams and weapons to down the birds, which he combined with the anti-grav belt and wings he used in his ornithological studies. His actions and garb formed the basis of the Hawk Police, which Thanagar had previously felt no need to maintain. They formed just in time, too.

Thanagar got off easy for a few years, but it had set itself up as a regional guardian of law and order and had battled the mysterious Empire, an intergalactic band of space marauders bent on conquest. The only thing standing in the Empire's way was Thanagar and the Empire attacked in *Hawkman* #26 to get them out of the way. They planned to demoralize and fragment the forces of the planet by implicating Katar Hol, the greatest Hawkman of them all, as a traitor. But for the determined resistance and inventive manner in which Katar and Shayera proved the plot to their people, the Empire would have succeeded.

Once Katar was captured by the Empire's troops laying in wait for him on Earth, he capily learned that the Empire was after the Egg Of Harun. The relic, in Katar's possession on Earth, was created by a Tarin scientist specifically to defeat the Empire. He also allowed himself to be taken back to Queen Elda's ship in order to get some room to escape with the Egg. Running a gauntlet of Empire warships, Katar crashes on Thanagar



with the Egg and the real traitor, Count Oyama, betrayed himself making a grab for the egg's power.

Thanagar's peace was short-lived, though. The insane being called Jestmaster infected the entire planet with massive paranoid psychosis, just one of many planets to fall under the lunatic's spell of insanity. His next target was Earth; the Hawks teamed with the Justice League (as they no longer had a title of their own) to defeat the mad menace. Thanagar was cured of its insanity, but the once-great planet and its people were shaken and beginning to doubt

its own effectiveness as a people and as guardians. It was the beginning of a long downhill slide for Thanagar.

The slide was greased by their next invasion. In *Justice League* #117, Hawkman found that a galleon-like space ship was spreading a dust-like microbe. Thinking nothing of it, he returned to the planet and, like the rest of Thanagar's population, came under the spell of the equalizing plague.

The plague was the work of The Equalizer, an alien being who went from planet to planet spreading his microbes that would take the sum

total of the characteristics and skills of a group exposed to it, average them, reconstruct its victims to that average. A population of divergent beings would all become the same height, the same weight, IQ, strength, fighting skill, physical beauty, courage, resourcefulness, inventiveness, etc. Under the equalizing plague, Thanagar became a race of interchangeable semi-skilled near duplicates of each other, with little diversity or initiative. In hopes of curing himself, Hawkman exposed members of the JLA to the disease, but only succeeded in equalizing

them all while he gained only a fraction of normalcy. The group set out to battle The Equalizer, but found he had the ability to summon any force necessary to counteract anything they threw at him.

In the end, The Equalizer was destroyed when Hawkman suggested they attack him with emotions, specifically hatred. The villain countered with love for his enemy and was so overcome with guilt at what he'd done to those he loved that he destroyed himself, freeing them from the curse in the process.

In the next story, Hawkman freed his wife from the curse by exposing her to a race of adaptoids that had invaded Earth. The Adaptoids, in their effort to adapt to the effects of the microbe, effectively drew it out of Shayera's body. However, there was nothing the Hawks could do for their planet and they were left in exile on Earth as Thanagar became a quarantined planet.

Thanagar endured five years of relative peace to rebuild their shattered society, but rebuilding was difficult under the effects of the plague. Because of this, Thanagar next fell victim to the power mad alien Hyathis, in *Showcase* #101. Hyathis conquered the planet to use its armada against her former partner in conquest, Kanjar Ro, who had betrayed her years before in *Justice League* #1. Kanjar Ro, however, had conquered the planet Rann, another once great world that had fallen on hard times, to use as his army. Adam Stange looked Hawkman up and they teamed up to put a stop to this intergalactic puppet war.

With the help of Hyathis and her enforcers, Byth and The Man Hawks, Hawkman defeated Kanjar Ro and freed Rann from his clutches. However, when he turned his attention to the villainous Hyathis, the people of Thanagar said stop. Though she was wicked, tyrannical and a power-hungry despot, Hyathis had freed the planet from the grip of the hated equalizing plague and provided the directionless people with a path and a strong will they could follow. When Hawkman spoke out against this dictator in regent's clothes, Hyathis banished him and Shayera from Thanagar with the blessing of the population.

Hawks Without a Country

Unable to oppose an entire planet, the Hawks accepted the decision and returned to Earth where they battled crime alone and with the Justice League. For three years they put the fate of their planet out of their mind, until they were forced to con-



front it once again in *World's Finest* #268.

In a battle against the mutant Bee-Men of the villain Lord Insecticus, Hawkman was stung. The mutant venom defied any Earthly medical treatment. Hawkgirl had to take him to Thanagar if she was to save him.

But Thanagar was still off-limits to the two Earth-bound police officers. Upon arriving Hawkgirl found out just how unwelcomed they were. She had to fight her way through a gauntlet of police to get the medical help her husband needed. The prospect of her fighting friends and countrymen, combined with the feelings of inadequacy that were flaring up again, was having an effect on her. The normally calm and placid woman was becoming short-tempered and irritable.

After getting Hawkman treated, and loudly proclaiming her name was now Hawkwoman, Shayera and her husband set out to stop Hyathis's newly-discovered plans to invade Earth and, if possible, overthrow her rule on Thanagar.

Hawkman was forced to head off the invasion by trapping the entire Thanagarian space fleet in a dimensional warp, a move his wife strongly disagreed with. So, while Hawkman deposed the despot with the aid of Superman and Batman, Hawkwoman single-handedly freed the fleet from the warp. It was a twin victory: Hawkman had a free Thanagar and Hawkwoman had her self-esteem back. However, Thanagar was battered, devastated, and alien to the Hols and was no longer the world they'd known previous to Hyathis' rule. They were more comfortable on Earth and they returned.

Mad Shadows

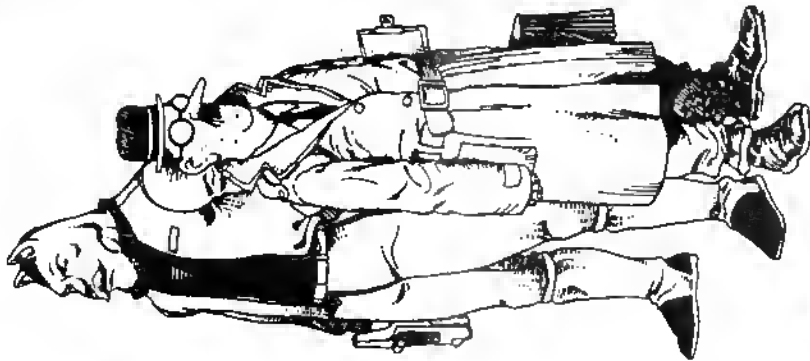
While the Hawks fought crime on Earth, Thanagar was reacting to their decade of turmoil. The population became bitter and cynical about the old peaceful ways that seemed to invite invasion and suffering, and began to abandon them. Science and knowledge had been destroyed by the invasions, Hyathis herself, and "thrill thieves," criminals of the planet who committed crimes for the simple fun of it. All that was left to Thanagar was what Hyathis had bequeathed them, packaged in soldiers who had been loyal to her. They seized control of the planet and the reeling population shrugged their collective shoulders. Their plans: To return the planet to glory through interplanetary conquest, and the first target was earth, as chronicled in *The Shadow War of Hawkman* mini-series.

Thanagarian secret police were dispatched to Earth to kill the Hawks for their Thanagarian technology, some of which were the only working models, and sabotage the Earth resistance efforts when the actual invasion took place. This plot was uncovered in time, but at a considerable loss to the Hawks. Mavis Trent, their longtime friend and co-worker at the museum and Shayera's adversary for her husband's affections, was killed. The Hawks were forced to erase all databanks on Thanagar the JLA had and to destroy the equipment they had. Finally, their space cruiser was blown to bits, stranding them on Earth, and it seems they only delayed the plot.

As the 50th anniversary of the creation of Hawkman as a concept approaches, the character faces an uncertain future both dramatically and editorially. As always, his fate as a published feature remains with the fans.

**COMING THIS
SUMMER FROM
FANTAGRAPHICS
BOOKS INC.**

A line of limited-series full-color
comics so distinctive it
deserves its own imprint!



Upshot
GRAPHICS

FLESH & BONES

FLESH & BONES

A 4-part series featuring Dalgado by Jan Strnad and Dennis Fujitake, plus *The Bouleffries Saga* by Allen Moore and Steve Parkhouse.

We're kicking off Upshot with two proven hits—Dalgado and Alan Moore!
In Strnad and Fujitake's *Flesh & Bones*, Dat fights traitorous Earthlings and malevolent aliens to regain his world, his friends, and his self-esteem. He's tired of being the underdog—this time he's coming out on top!

Meanwhile, Trevor Inchmale the renegade is hot on the trail of the irrepressible Bouleffries in Moore and Parkhouse's *The Bouleffries Saga*. One of the family is a werewolf... and the others are even stranger! Highly acclaimed in its native England, *The Bouleffries Saga* sees print for the first time in America—and for the first time anywhere in color—in the back pages of *Flesh & Bones*! Softcover next month!

BLOOD OF THE BEAST

A 4-part series by Jan Strnad and Steve Parkhouse.

Utilizing a radically different style than he employed in *The Bouleffries Saga*, Steve Parkhouse struts his stuff in this haunting horror adventure penned by Jan Strnad. *Blood of the Beast* is a terrifying tale that will not quickly—or easily—be forgotten.

DINOSAUR REX

A 3-part series by Jan Strnad, Henry Mayo, and Steve Blaettle.

Hollywood movie artist Henry Mayo was called in to bring to life Jan Strnad's witty rendition of a 1920's-era world where the dinosaurs never died out! This one has everything a jungle adventure needs: Brawny men, beautiful women, treachery and

deceit, mysterious natives with uncanny powers, and dinosaurs, dinosaurs, dinosaurs!

Plus, A related backup feature illustrated by Swamp Thing artist: Steve Bissette!

MIRACLE SQUAD

A 4-part series by John Woolley and Terry Tidwell.

There was some hot competition among independent publishers for this one!

Set in Hollywood in the Dirty '30s, *The Miracle Squad* chronicles the exploits of a dedicated group of movie studio employees as they match wits and fists with a powerful racketeer!

John Woolley has written for *Eerie*, *Fangoria*, *Rolling Stone*, and other magazines, as well as co-authoring two novels, *Old Fevers* and *Den Turner*. Hollywood Detective, Newcomer Terry Tidwell has had a long-running strip in *Media Sight* magazine and recently pencilled a story for *Marvel's Savage Sword of Conan*.

Look for *The Miracle Squad* to catch on quick!

MIRACLE SQUAD

The Upshot Graphics line is targeted to a slightly older readership than that associated with superhero books. An approximate age range for Upshot titles is roughly "13 to adult."

None of the Upshot series listed on this page needs or will bear a "Mature Readers" advisory. They are meant to be displayed on open shelves without the need for monitoring by retailers.

All Upshot books will be action/adventure, limited series, full-color comics. Watch for further ads and announcements about Upshot Graphics in *Amazing Heroes*, *The Comics Journal*, and *The Comics Buyer's Guide*.

Coming in MAY From

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

THREAT #4:

Tequila Mockingbird & the Temple of Boom

MICHAEL KRAIGER's Zone is on the cover, and then he steps into the spotlight when Ultra Violent persuades him to come to New York and throw a party for him. The Holo Bros. are awaiting their sacrifice on the altar of the Bush-Toad, or a last-minute rescue by Tequila Mockingbird and a boy stowaway, whichever comes first.

Enigma unicycles into a dusty desert town and suddenly finds himself the body guard of a hapless sheriff. Bob Mercenary plays a grim game of cat-and-mouse with a dangerous rasta, and loses.

The most exciting anthology comic in town, courtesy of JAY GELDHOF, MICHAEL KRAIGER, JIM ROHN, GARY FIELDS and DAVE HARRISON.

Threat #4, 32 pages, black & white with color covers. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in May. \$2.25 (Canada, \$3.15).



BOOK TWO \$9.95

Love AND ROCKETS



LOVE AND ROCKETS BOOK TWO

The out-of-print issues #3 and 4 of the series that has become the phenomenon of independent comics publishing, together again for the first time, in popular trade paperback and signed, deluxe limited hardcover editions. All-new for this volume: Full-color front and back covers by GILBERT and JAIME HERNANDEZ cover, a new story by Gilbert, and an expanded version of Jaime's "100 Rooms." Reprints the very first "Heartbreak Soup" from Gilbert Hernandez's widely acclaimed series, the super-hero shenanigans of brother Jaime's "Maggie vs. Mamek," and the front and back covers of *Love and Rockets* #5 3 & 4 in color, and a lot more. We've stepped-up production on this one to follow up as soon as possible on the smash-hit sell-out that was *Book One*. If you got shut out on that one, you'll know to place your order early for this one!

Love and Rockets Book Two, 150 pages. Squarebound, black and white with color covers. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in May. Softcover, \$9.95 (Canada, \$13.50). Signed, limited edition hardcover, \$30.00 (Canada, \$38.50).

DOOMSDAY SQUAD #2: A John Byrne Classic!

Retired (but with JOHN BYRNE's name still prominently displayed), this deluxe reprint series continues with another exciting post-apocalyptic installment of *Doomsday* #1—superbly recolorored by DAIGODA'S MARK WHEATLEY and KATHRYN MAYER.

Plus: A special, full-color episode of DANIEL CLOWES' *Lloyd Llewellyn*. Fantagraphics Books' new smash series!

With all the attention being focused on John Byrne's move from Marvel to DC and Superman, look for renewed interest in all his older work. *Doomsday Squad* couldn't come at a better time, so be sure to order high!

Doomsday Squad #2, 32 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in May. \$2.00 (Canada, \$2.75).



STILL AVAILABLE!

Distributors and retailers will want to restock their supply of some of Fantagraphics Books' evergreens in anticipation of the summer season—especially the high-quality, in-demand book collections. So take a moment to re-order a few of these high-profit items for your summer customers!

At Home With Rick Geary and Persons Living or Dead— two thoroughly modern books that are enjoying an unexpected success!

Children of the Night-Tide. A magical volume by Jan (Daigoda) Strnad you may have missed the first time around!

The Complete E.C. Segar: A favorite of your adult and more discriminating customers, all four volumes are still available in distributor quantities!

The Ditko Collection Vol. One: With a new Ditko title on the way from *Hemlock*, could the much-deserved renewal of interest in *Spider-Man* Ditko be far away?

Two this month, plan on a new flare-up of interest in this already incredibly hot series!

Prince Valiant: All three superb full-color editions are in stock. A favorite for all ages—and reasonably priced, too! And chances are you'll want to refurbish your stock on such favorite Fantagraphics Books comics as *Captain Jack* (first issue in stock from FBI), *Critters* (all three issues in stock), *Daigoda* (all 8 issues in stock), *Lloyd Llewellyn* (issues 2 & 3 in stock), *Mechanica* (first 2 issues in stock), *Next Stuff* (issues 3 and 4 in stock), and *Three* (all 3 issues in stock)

COPYRIGHTS: PAGE 1: Love and Rockets cover © 1986 Gilbert Hernandez; Threat cover © 1986 Michael Kraeger; illustration © 1986 Jim Rohn. PAGE 2: *Comics Journal* cover © 1986 First Comics, Inc. & Howard Chaykin, Inc.; *Captain Jack* cover © 1985 Mike Kazaleh; "Gruel" panel © 1986 Freddy Milton; *Critters* cover © 1986 Ken Macklin; PAGE 3: *Jonny Quest* illustration © 1985 Hanna-Barbera; *Doomsday Squad* logo © 1986 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. PAGE 4: *Dell/Bajajeffres* illustration © 1985 Dennis Fujitake/Sieve Parkhouse



NEMO #20: Alex Raymond's Secret Agent X-9, R.B. Fuller's Oaky Doaks, J. Swinnerton.

Our gorgeous ALEX RAYMOND full-color cover heralds an article by JIM IVEY on the special, little-seen, fantastic art that the syndicates used to promote their strips in the 30s and 40s.

Comics historian Maurice Horn called it "an immensely attractive strip—a delightful mix of real danger and action with all types of humor—visual, sophisticated, slapstick, genuinely funny, superbly drawn and well written." Now you can see for yourself, as we rediscover RALPH BRIGGS FULLER's *Oaky Doaks*, the comic-strip Man of La Mancha, with a complete episode from the 1930s. Then, Bill Blackbeard and Donald Phelps take a look at the wild west art of JIMMY SWINNERTON with a beautiful accompanying portfolio of Sunday pages, and Mark Johnson steps inside GENE AHERN's *Squirrel Cage*.

NEMO: The Classic Comics Library #20, 66 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in May. \$3.50 (Canada, \$4.65).

The New AMAZING HEROES: Byrne's Supes & Jonny Quest!

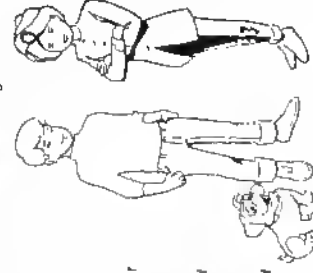
This summer, *Amazing Heroes*, fandom's favorite fanzine, acquires a dynamic new look, as well as adding pages and features, courtesy of a brand new hotshot editorial/production staff! With snappier and more exciting graphics backing up a richer, more diversified editorial direction (including more interviews, the return of regular comic strips, new columns, extensive previews of coming comics...), look for *AH* to become absolutely indispensable for any self-respecting fan!

And who better than JOHN BYRNE to start off this new series, with a breathtaking original cover of Superman—accompanied by an in-depth preview in which John tells all (and we mean *all*) about his version of the Man of Steel. It's happening in *Amazing Heroes* #96—and you shouldn't need to know any more about the issue to order high!

AH #97 presents a complete look at *Jonny Quest*, with a preview of Comico's new series (including a talk with Quest writer WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS, of *Journey* fame), an interview with TV series creator DOUG WILDEY, a series episode guide, a new, full-color Wilder cover painting of Jonny and his pals, and more!

Amazing Heroes #96, 84 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in early May. \$2.50 (Canada, \$3.50).

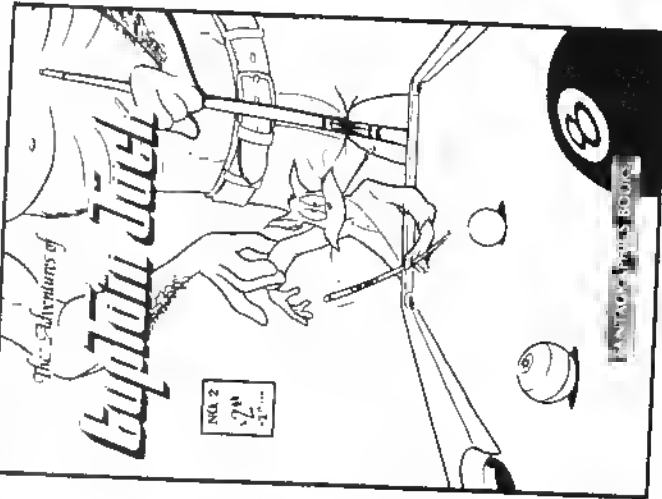
Amazing Heroes #97, 84 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in late May. \$2.50 (Canada, \$3.50).



CAPTAIN JACK #2: Robot Romance

It's another Saturday night, and time for the Captain and the crew to get clean, get drunk, and get crazy. Herman discovers a new drink! Adam makes a new friend... and then meets her maker! and oh, that shock ending! Animator MIKE KAZALEH belts another one out of the galaxy.

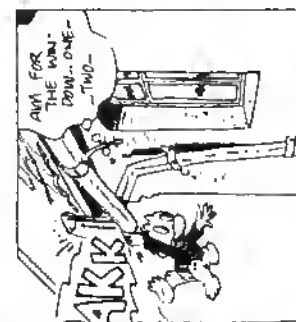
Captain Jack #2, 32 pages, black & white with color covers. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in May. \$2.00 (Canada, \$2.75).



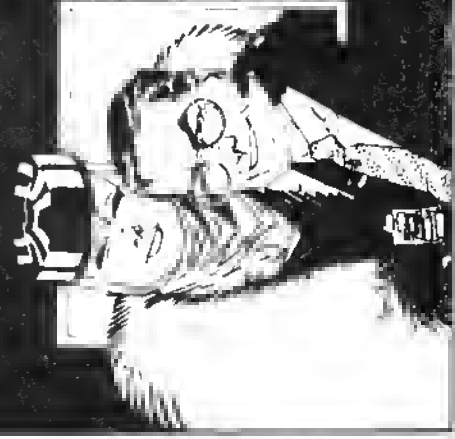
CRITTERS #4: Animal Magnetism!

A magnificent full-color cover painting by KEN MACKLIN (of *Epic Illustrated* fame) is the highlight of this dynamite issue, in which FREDDY MILTON's family of dragons attempt to fix up their house and are beset by ongoing disasters. Also, things get hot for young Prince Afton when he returns to his home planet to find big changes in STEVE GALLACCI's "Birthright." Plus: a film noir, funny-animal detective story by TOM "Spaced" STAZER.

Critters #4, 32 pages. Published by Fantagraphics Books, Inc. Shipping in May. \$2.00 (Canada, \$2.75).



The Comics Journal



COMICS JOURNAL #109: Chaykin After Flagg!

The cover is a sneak preview of the new *Times* series by HOWARD CHAYKIN, one of comics' most celebrated writer/artists. Inside, he talks about his career after *American Flagg!* Also, a few words from Katy Keene's BILL WOGGON and an analysis of ROY CRANE's *Roscoe Sweeney* by Javier Coma. C.C. BECK takes his *Oppenheimer* Shot against artists using their influence inappropriately, followed by all the columns, the letters, the news, and the reviews that go into making up every issue of the magazine that writes about the comics as if they mattered.

The Comics Journal #109, 100 pages. Published by The Comics Journal, Inc. Shipping in May. \$2.95 (Canada, \$4.10).



© 1986 Herb Trimpe

The First True Alternative Comics

by Ken Jones

Most of you read David Puckett's article "The Relevance of Undergrounds" which appeared in issue #74 of this magazine. Mr. Puckett rightly traces the evolution of the Undergrounds as they evolved into today's Alternative Comics. But somehow in the process, he forgot to mention what I feel are the two most important links in this evolutionary chain, *High Adventure*

Comix and *Big Apple Comix*.

By allowing mainline Marvel, DC, and Gold Key creators a chance to create in an unrestricted environment, these two early 1970s comics eventually provided an inspiration and an example which culminated in today's Alternative Companies such as Eclipse, First, and Renegade Press.

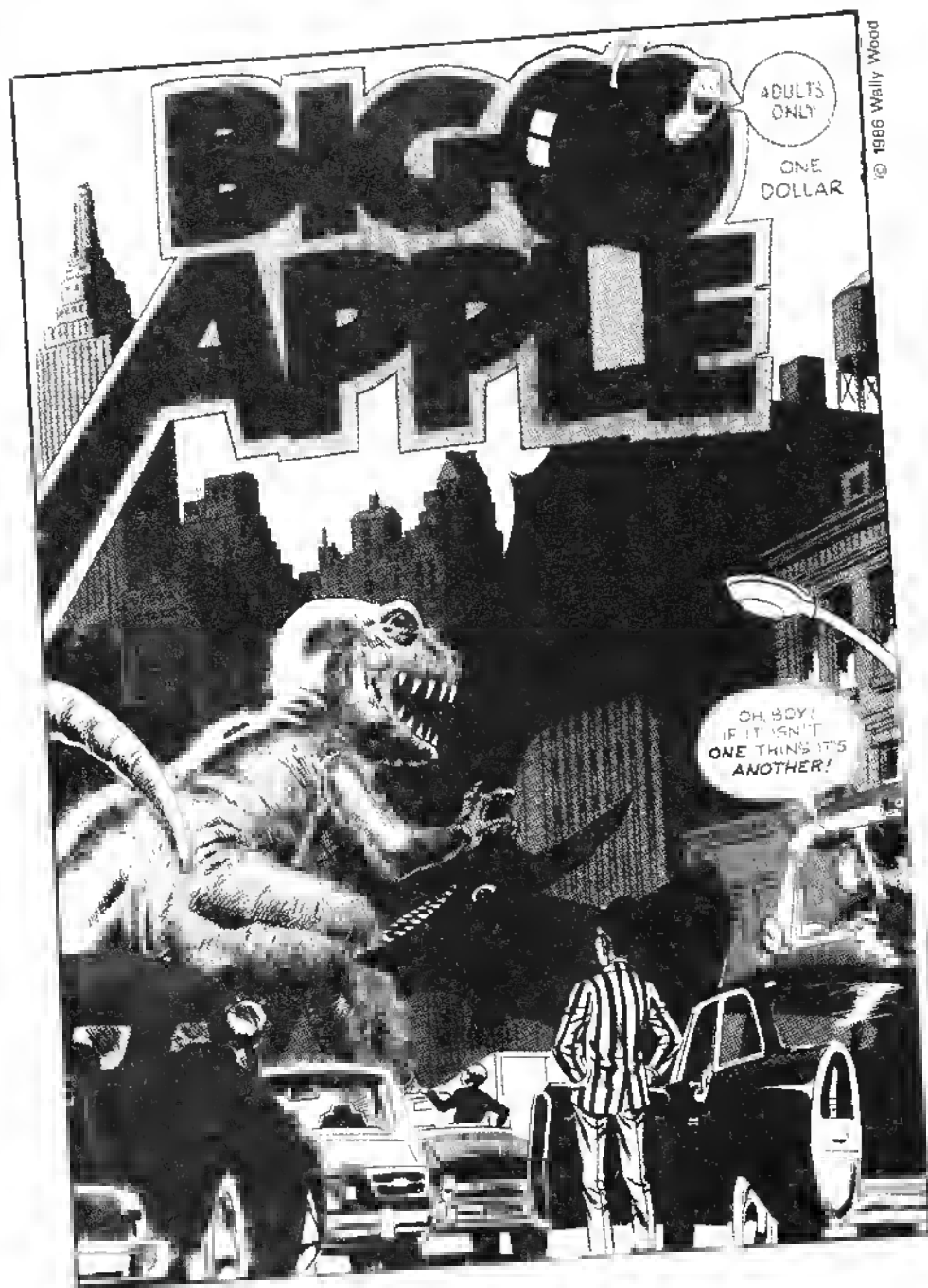
It is not surprising that Mark Eva-

nier, a man who has created in every genre of comic books (as well as television and animation), was the inspiration behind *High Adventure Comix* from Kitchen Sink Press.



© 1986 Mike Royer

From *HIGH ADVENTURE*, "Anniki," illustrated by Mike Royer.



Evanier, best known for *DNAgents* and *Crossfire* from Eclipse and *Blackhawk* from DC, wrote three out of four pieces in this trend-setting one-shot. Bob Kline illustrated two of the three stories that Mark wrote, turning in very interesting graphics.

"Nimbus," a sexy science fiction story, would be at home in *Heavy Metal Magazine*. "Stalker" is even more fun, but since I am absolutely crazy about any kind of time travel story, how could I not like this tale of big game hunters in the days of the dinosaurs? "Lord Sabre," which was illustrated by Steve (New Mutants, Secret Wars) Leialoha, concerns a Walter Mitty-type who longs to be a hero in an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel. This piece is especially noteworthy as it also represents Leialoha's first professional sale.

Perhaps my favorite feature in



"Nimbus," another story that appeared in *HIGH ADVENTURE*.

High Adventure was done by Mike River. River, who is perhaps best remembered as the finest inker who ever embellished Jack Kirby or Russ Manning, is also an excellent writer and penciller as well. "Anniki" evolved from a shelved project called "Heroes of Calavalla," based on an ancient Finnish epic that was originally done for an as yet unpublished Kirby tabloid called *Superworld*. Anniki was originally the girlfriend of Calavalla's hero Eric. "Anniki" still reads well and she compares favorably with Frank Thorne's cult favorite *Chita of Mizart*. Evanier has also told me that he hopes to someday soon revive this barebreasted, swashbuckling beauty.

Stan Lee's former secretary "Fabulous Flo" Steinberg probably did not realize the historical importance of *Big Apple Comics* when she published it. As she has said several times in interviews, the book was conceived as a lark, a chance for mainstream comic book pros to work in an uncensored medium. Little did anyone realize that this book would point the way to a whole new era of comic books.

Stu Schwartzberg and Marie Severin's "The Man Without A City" is quite amusing. Aside from some profanity, this could just as well have appeared in Marvel's *Crazy Magazine* where these two creators most often worked at this time.

The second story, "Peep Shaws," features (are you ready for this?) Archie Goodwin's well-known caricature persona. However, this well-known mascot of the Epic Comics line here takes us on a no-holds-barred tour of Times Square's raunchy porno shops, rather than telling us about the latest issue of *Eliques!*

If this sounds strange, Wally Wood's parody of his E.C. classic "My World" is even more disconcerting. Remember this story came out years before Woody became a

genuine porno smith for Nuance Publications with the triple x-rated *Red* magazine as that was to be his last work before his tragic suicide. Although totally hardcore, "My World" is state-of-the-art Wood illustration and is quite funny.

"Tuho" by Al Williamson is not only interesting because of its fine graphics, it is also amusing in its depiction of Roy Thomas as a *Tahu* *Cave* of Mars-like barbarian surrounded by aubilee nude alien wenches.

"Over and Under," a split-screen narrative, is truly outrageous. This parallel story of a round-heeled secretary and a cheap prostitute features Neal Adams story-telling on the secretary and Larry Hama and Ralph Reese sequential story-telling on the prostitute sequence. I'd like to go into detail about the plotlines but not everyone reading this article is the legal minimum age. Sorry, kids.

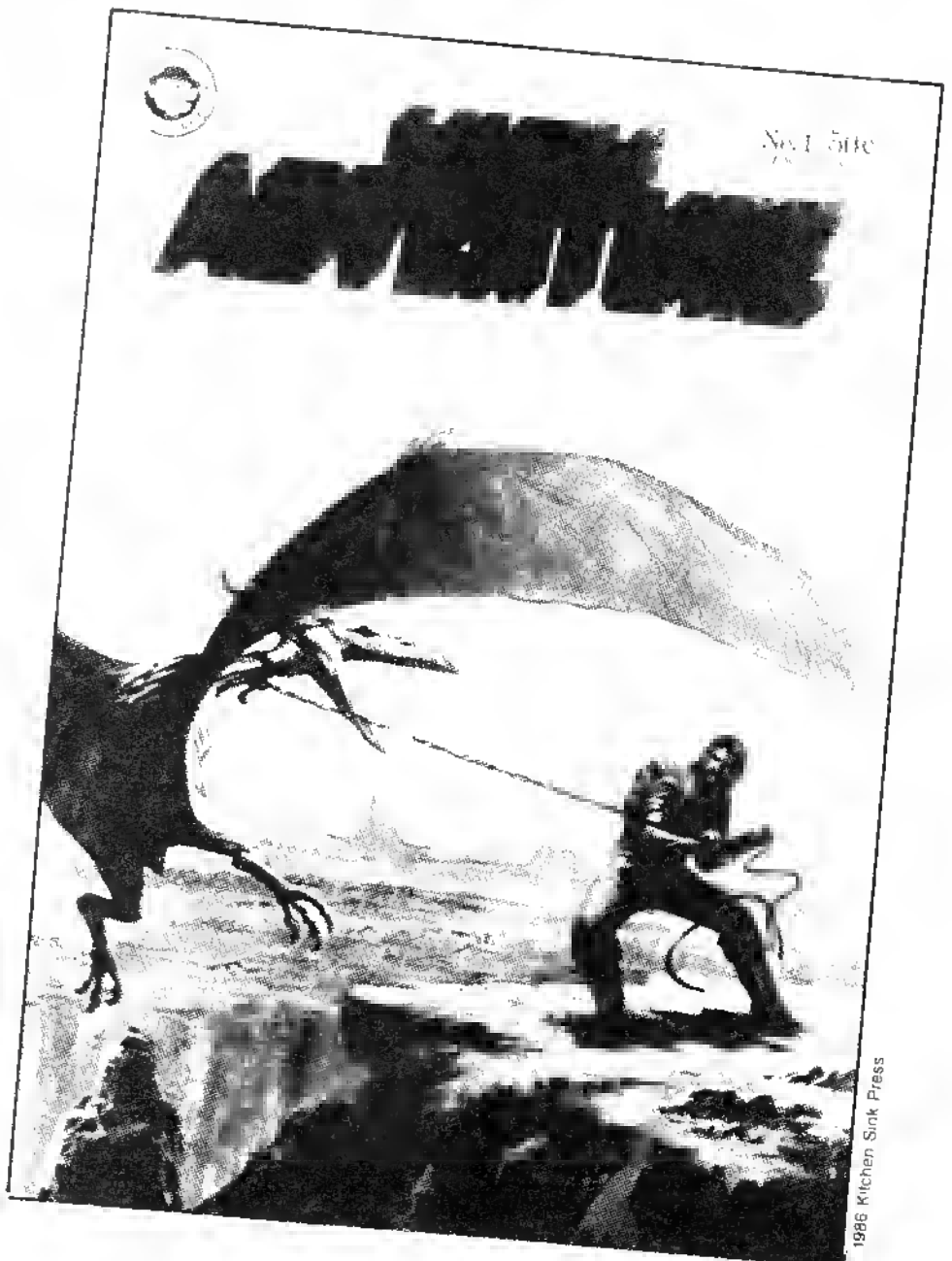
Alan Weiss's "The Battery Is Down" is a slice of urban life that is funny in a crude sort of way. "Lotso Yax" is a King Kong two-page gag that is significant because it features Woody inks which bring out Herb (The Hulk) Trimpe's pencils like

nobody else every has. "The Silent Majority" is an Eisneresque wordless, captionless two-pager by Mike Ploog, best known for his art on *Ghost Rider* and *Weirdworld*.

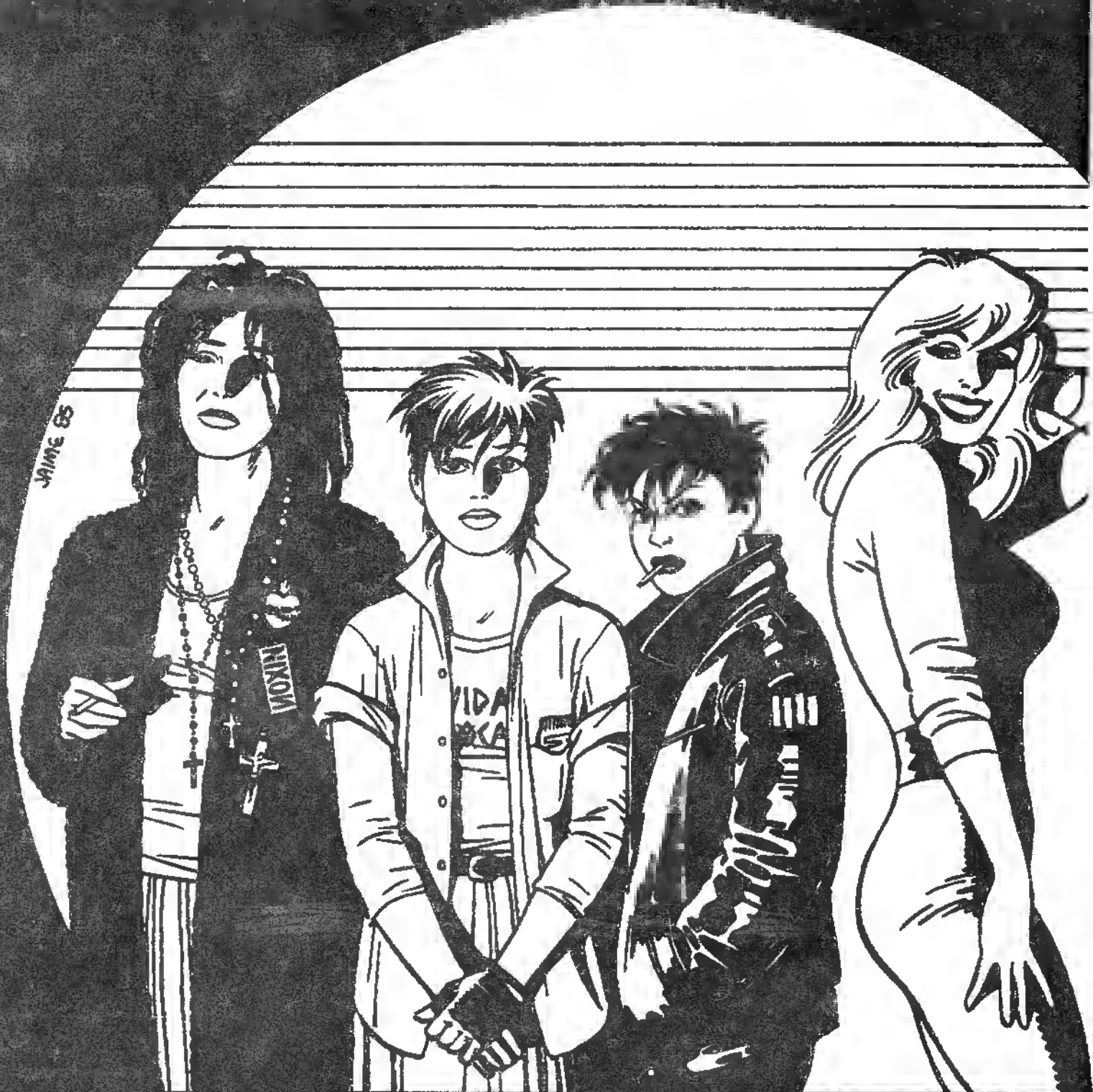
The issue closes with one of the best things Herb Trimpe has ever done. "The Token" is a futuristic tale about a picnic on the site of the lost city of New York. Ralph Reese's hack cover, depicting a New York subway with a demonic personification of paranoia, is enough to graphically explain why the New York subway made national headlines last year at Christmas time.

Big Apple and *High Adventure Comics* are quite obscure today, but it is my hope that Mr. Kitchen and Ms. Steinberg will reprint these two fine comic books (hint, hint). If they do, you can bet that they will be comfortably and appropriately placed on the comic racks next to *American Flagg!*, *Love and Rockets*, and *Echo of Futurepast*. For where else would you put the first true Alternative titles? ●

KEN JONES last wrote a history of the *Vengeance Squad* for *Amazing Heroes* #88.



THE BEST COMIC OF THE '80s?



LOVE AND ROCKETS

"The pure and essential crackle of comicbooks at their best runs through these pages. Accept no substitutes."

—ALAN MOORE (Swamp Thing)

"The Hernandez Brothers are extending the parameters of the comic book form as an expressive artform . . ."

—KEN KRUGE (WBAI, New York)

"A pleasure to read over and over again—and hell, even more."

—MATT HOWARTH (Heavy Metal)

"Their stories have a naturalism that I've never seen done in any comics."

—STEVE LEIALOHA (Marvel Comics)

"One of the best things on the market."

—STEVE RUDE (Nexus)

"Everybody should be out there reading Love and Rockets."

—HOWARD CHAYKIN (American Flagg!)

"C'est une merveille . . . un dessin 'parfait'!"

—MOEBIUS (Heavy Metal)

" . . . the most unpredictable fantasy and the most advanced characterization published today."

—WENDY PINI (Elquest)

"Never before have comics produced such strong cumulative effects."

—DAVID CHUTE (L.A. Herald-Examiner)

"So real, so funny, so rich. There's no comic like it. In fact, there's nothing like it, period."

—HEIDI MacDONALD (Comics Buyer's Guide)

Published every other month by FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

COMICS IN REVIEW

BEASTS OF BURDEN

CRITTERS #1

written and illustrated by VARIOUS
edited by KIM THOMPSON
Fantagraphics Books
\$2.00

Critters is the newest anthology title from Fantagraphics Books, taking its name from the fact that all the stories presented therein are drawn in the so-called "funny animal" style.

Leading off in this premiere issue is "Bounty Hunter" by Stan Sakai. Set in an anthropomorphic version of medieval Japan, the story features his rabbit ronin character, Usagi Yojimbo. In this installment Usagi, being somewhat short of funds, joins forces with a rhino bounty hunter who is on the trail of a gang of bandits. The first two-and-a-half pages of the story, which consists of verbal sparring between the two swordsmen, are excellently written and eminently enjoyable to read.

We then get six pages of swordplay that are not nearly so entertaining,

and are in fact mildly disturbing. The various animal characters are portrayed with "comic" faces as Usagi hacks and stabs them, their expressions similar to those displayed by the victims of Sergio Aragones's *Groo the Wanderer*. The difference, though, is that *Groo* is played almost totally for laughs; the death and destruction dished out is not dissimilar to the bombings and bludgeonings that go on in an old cartoon.

Sakai's *Yojimbo* story is not a comedy, however; it is presented as a fairly straightforward drama. Seeing funny faces on beings who are being disembowelled really doesn't appeal to my sense of humor. This story also points out a bit of fallacious thinking on the part of some people. They complain about the obligatory and seemingly mindless fight scenes in mainstream comics—well, drawing a story in a style and manner that is totally different from that of *Sal Buscema* does not magically transform identical scenes into philosophical exercises.

The saving grace for this story is a nicely amusing ending. And, while Sakai has yet to impress me with his

"Usagi Yojimbo" from *CRITTERS* #1: Seeing funny faces on beings who are being disemboweled doesn't appeal to our critic's sense of humor.



R.A. JONES ON

- *CRITTERS* #1
- *JOURNEY* #22-24
- *NEAT STUFF* #2-3
- *THREAT* #1
- *NEMO: The Classic Comics Library* #16
- *LOVE AND ROCKETS* #15
- *THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN JACK* #1
- *AT HOME WITH RICK GEARY*

...and biting the hand that feeds him

COMICS IN REVIEW

storytelling abilities, I do find him to be a terrific cartoonist. He displays clean, crisp pencils and a smoothly flowing sense of visual craft. While certainly exhibiting its share of weaknesses, "Bounty Hunter" proved to be the best of the offerings presented therein.

The worst of the lot was "The Day After Forever," by Joshua Quagmire. In it, a small girl named Domino sits on a sidewalk and reads a Cutey Bunny story to her dog (Cutey Bunny, for those not in the know, being the title character of a book written and drawn by Quagmire).

This story-within-a-story presents Cutey teamed up with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby in one of their "Road" movies. We aren't shown the beginning of that story; what we are shown contains nothing remotely funny; and we don't get to see the ending.

Before Domino can reach the conclusion, she looks up into the sky, to see an atom bomb hurtling downward. Yes, poor little Domino is a resident of Nagasaki, Japan—and one of the many thousands of victims of the second atom bomb to be used in war, on Aug. 9, 1945.

Perhaps Quagmire thought he was avoiding one of the creakiest of clichés simply by not placing the story in Hiroshima. If so, he was mistaken.

The ending has no emotional impact whatsoever, coming off like a 14-year-old's attempt at social commentary. The juxtaposition of the Cutey Bunny interlude with this story serves no real dramatic purpose; the ridiculous and the horrific have always dwelt in the same house, and to rail against it is as to seek to stop the wind with a single upraised hand.

The editors would have done better to give Quagmire a free one-page ad in which to plug his Cutey Bunny comic and then turn the remaining nine pages over to someone who could have delivered a story worth reading.

Rounding out the issue is "Birthright" by Steve Gallacci. This story will probably work best for fans of his Erma Felna strip, for I understand it takes place in the same universe, at a later time in history. Even those who have never seen his previous work, however, will be able to follow "Birthright."

It is a science-fiction tale involving the revolution-torn world of Shartoa. The ruling prince, Anton, is overthrown and captured while his young son—thinking his father to be dead—flees to safety.

Since this was merely the first installment of what is intended to be

a five or six-part story, it is hard to pass a firm verdict on its merits. Gallacci is an accomplished cartoonist, and the script is certainly competent, though not exceptional in any way.

As I have freely admitted, I don't fully understand why artists choose to tell dramatic stories in the funny animal style normally reserved for works of humor. On the other hand, the style the artist chooses to use is not as important as is the story. While all three of the creators represented in *Critters* have displayed some measure of scripting talent (in the past, if not here), none of their efforts in this first issue are particularly memorable.

While it will be interesting to see how Stan Sakai develops, and how well "Birthright" unfolds, there's just not quite enough meat on these critters for me to recommend it yet.

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY

JOURNEY #22-24
written and illustrated by **WILLIAM F. MESSNER-LOEBS**
edited by **NADINE LOEBS** and **KIM THOMPSON**
Fantagraphics Books
\$2.00

Journey is William Messner-Loebs's somewhat rambling saga of the life and times of Wolverine MacAlistaire, a frontiersman in the American northeast of the early 19th century. In the three issues to be examined here, Loebs displays both the strengths and weaknesses that are the signs of a one-man show.

In issue #22, MacAlistaire and others set out on the trail of a wolf. As is often the case in this book, the reader must wade through a great deal of dialogue in the process. Much of it is extraneous, but sprinklings of it are brilliant, as when one character launches into a psychotic discourse that culminates with him comparing killing to the sex act (a disturbing linkage that I fear has much relevance today).

Loebs rightfully prides himself on the amount of work done to make the various aspects of this strip historically authentic—only to occasionally undercut those efforts, as he does here. A silly and superfluous scene rudely intrudes on the mood of the story when we are presented with three men who are haunted by the spirit of a dead brother. Fortunately for them, though not for us, they run into Pere Winter, a frontier necromancer. He solves their spirit

problem simply by shouting: "Ey, Cochon! Wake up! You're dead!" Likewise, this dreadful attempt at humor leaves a dead space in the flow of the story.

It snaps back with an excellent closing sequence, in which Wolverine falls into a snow drift and the murderous wolf goes in after him. This continues into the next issue, where again we see strength and weakness side-by-side.

A nice touch is the writing of the narrative captions, which are told in the wolf's "thoughts." The frontiersman's battle with the animal is marred, however, by cartoonish art that severely diminishes the impact of the struggle. Wolverine appears to be wrestling with a Muppet rather than a ravenous beast.

While on the subject of Loebs's art, let me state that here also there are strong dichotomies. Obviously influenced by Will Eisner's work, the graphics are naturally quite different from that of your average comic. Loebs has a good sense of visual dynamics and effective layouts. One of his big deficiencies is that his idea of a background appears to be complete shading in the space behind the characters. Aside from that, forget it. Since the current story takes place in the winter, we get far too much blank white space, unrelieved by color.

Another glaring hallmark of his art is very evident here, first in the face of the small boy known only as Boy-child. As drawn by Loebs, the poor lad looks like a Cabbage Patch Kid who's had his hair burned away.

It is then you realize that every single character in this story is ugly. They're not just plain-looking or average—they're downright outhouse ugly. A common criticism of many comic book artists is that they have only one basic male and female look in their repertoire, and it is uniformly attractive. Usually, this is a valid knock. Loebs certainly presents a wider range of facial types than is the norm, but was it necessary to go so far in the opposite direction?

Uniform ugliness is no more realistic than is uniform beauty. The many daguerreotypes and photographs I've seen of frontier families show the same range of physical attractiveness one would expect to find in family photo albums today, despite the harsh life many of our ancestors led.

Running through issues #23 and 24 is also a murder mystery of sorts. It is rather muddled, however, for there are so many characters involved (so interchangeable in their ugliness as to be indistinguishable one from the other), and each seems intent on

revealing some dark secret in his or her past. Having seemingly interbred to the point of idiocy, the characters spill their collective guts in boring monologues that smack of soap operas.

Throw in another dreadful scene of Pere Winter talking to the dead, and the book now has as much in common with the reality of frontier life as George Lucas' "Indiana Jones" movies do to the career of your average archeologist.

That touches on what I perceive to be Loeb's major flaw in writing this strip. When he manages to tap into the bits of charming realism that are true-to-life or the exaggerated realism common to works of fiction, the series is highly enjoyable.

Too often, however, he lets himself become deeply mired in the merely mundane. This becomes quickly boring. On other, fortunately rarer, occasions, he dives completely into the absolutely incredible, distorting the flavor of the book.

Amidst meandering, over-written monologues and dialogues can be found such gems as Elmer Craft's statement that "there is no God west of Boston," and another gent's observation on Women: "Next they'll be asking to wear *underwear*, and ruin their health."

With its many supporting characters and overly extended storyline, *Journey* is a difficult book to jump

into the middle of. Due to the faults I have outlined, it is not consistently enjoyable enough for me to give it an overwhelming recommendation.

It does, however, hold sufficient merit to earn a place on my list of "Books you should try at least once, if for no other reason than to prevent your brain cells from atrophying under constant exposure to mutants and robots."

SOME KINDA STUFF

NEAT STUFF #2-3

written and illustrated by PETER BAGGE
edited by GARY GROTH
Fantagraphics Books
\$2.25

Barf. Shit. Piss. Fuck.

If you found yourself giggling uncontrollably while reading any or all of the above words, then chances are you're the kind of reader who will love *Neat Stuff*.

There's an equally good chance that you aren't over the age of 14 (so why is the thing "Recommended For Mature Readers?").

Neat Stuff is the brainchild (miscarriage?) of Peter Bagge. There is a little of Basil Wolverton in Bagge's art style, though I found more to resemble whoever did those horrible

"Spy vs. Spy" strips I read in *Mad* ages ago. Of course, in a humorous strip, I personally find (in most cases) that the style of art is of even less concern to me than in a dramatic series. What matters is the degree of humor—in plot, in dialogue, in situations.

These two issues of *Neat Stuff* produced three smiles, but nary a chuckle, and definitely nothing that approached actual laughter.

Issue #2 opens with "Studs Kirby Gets Drunk By Himself," and that title pretty well tells you the whole story. Good ol' Studs gets ripped, makes an ass of himself, threatens to kill every employee of a local television station, manages to knock himself out, and awakens the next day with no memory of the preceding 24 hours. Sounds like a giggle a second, doesn't it? Yet it's too goofy to have much value as an anti-drinking piece.

We then suffer through a three-page sojourn with *Girly-Girl* and *Chuckie Boy*. They represent the two basic character types that seem to be the only ones Bagge is inclined to portray: she a vile-tempered, selfish schemer; he a moronic idiot. Follow this with a one-page trip to a rock concert, highlighted by a boy who pukes all over himself.

Are you laughing yet?

Bagge then presents several pages of "Generic Jokes"—a mistake, since several of these stinkers are funnier than his "genuine" humor.

Ending the issue is a 13-pager starring a lazy bum named Junior. The goof-off leaves home and checks into a boarding house. For the remainder of the story, he (and we) must listen to the cynical prattling of his landlord—who revels in the deficiencies of his tenants and espouses the virtues of avarice and corruption.

Wiping the tears of mirth from my eyes, I somehow found the strength to proceed straight into issue #3. To my delight, we began with a full six pages devoted to the precocious *Girly-Girl*. The story ends in a way that demonstrates what appears to be Bagge's favorite resolution. Having inadvertently fallen victim to her own practical joke, the little lady responds by bashing *Chuckie Boy* over the head with a movie projector and shoving a bottle of aftershave lotion up the ass of a wino. Hey, who wants to see the Hulk destroy *Brooklyn* again when, for merely three times the price, we can watch *Girly-Girl* play junior proctologist?

Our old friend *Studs Kirby* is back this issue as well—sober now, though displaying no better sense. *Studs* is caught on the horns of a dilemma; will *Doris Day* remain his favorite singer or will her place in his heart

NEAT STUFF—dull, hopelessly anachronistic, humorless, and utterly juvenile.



be usurped by the upstart Brenda Lee? The delightfully stupid Studs receives what he perceives to be a message from above, telling him to remain faithful to Doris. Having been set straight, he returns to the bar wherein, earlier, two of his friends had attempted to ruffle him by bad-mouthing Ms. Day. He defends her honor by throwing beer in his female companion's face and punching out her male companion. This is a comedy classic that ranks right up there with the very best episodes of *Punky Brewster*.

Bagge is obviously exceedingly fond of music, using it and other aspects of popular culture as the subject matter for many of his stories. This must explain the recommendation that only mature readers sample it—"mature" in this instance referring to age. Most people under the age of 25 won't be able to make hide nor hair out of his references to *Laugh-In*, the Mamas and the Papas, Moms Mabley, etc.

In this vein, the third issue ends with an episode of "The Bradleys," a family whose sole saving grace is that it appears to have stopped breeding. It does give us the sole sympathetic character to enter the 62 pages of these two books—a "junkie" who recommends that young Bud Bradley buy a copy of *The Yardbirds Greatest Hits* at a used records store.

Anyone who seriously believes Bagge's efforts qualify as genuine social commentary probably believes that Johnny Carson is an intellectual satirist. Bagge's exhortations that we all take a listen to the music from the past is the most positive message to come out of *Neat Stuff*—and could have been presented in a one-page editorial in the *Comics Journal*.

As for the rest of *Neat Stuff*—it is dull, hopelessly anachronistic, humorless and utterly juvenile. Obviously this kind of strip works for some people, or it wouldn't be published. It would appear to hold the

most appeal to those who still find themselves bemused, amused and/or titillated by references to the spectrum of human bodily functions. I outgrew them when I was ten.

I hope the same is true for you.

DEATH THREATS

THREAT #1

written and illustrated by VARIOUS
edited by GARY GROTH
Fantagraphics Books
\$2.25

Threat is the newest anthology title from Fantagraphics Books; and while it isn't exactly dynamite, it packs much more punch than the above-ravaged *Critters*.

The lead-off hitter is "Bob Mercenary," written by Dave Harrison and drawn by Jay Geldhof. One is to assume that Bob's last name is also his occupation, which his plies in the alien city of Ousland.

Unfortunately for Bob, he has allowed himself to become heavily indebted. The only way he escapes dismemberment at the hands of a collection agency clone is by agreeing to track down another wayward soul, named Winston Williams—who has just joined a band of Rastafarian mercs called the Buffalo Soldiers.

Meanwhile, two rival "businessmen" are tailing Bob, and we learn that the Earth is involved in some sort of major war.

Being merely the first chapter of a multi-part story, the eight pages of "Bob Mercenary" here do little more than introduce the main characters. There is really no room to develop either them or the plot, and so there is very little on which to pass judgment. It is competently scripted, aiming at only mild humor (which is all it attains). Further exposure is needed before I point my critical

thumb up or down—which is true for the majority of the series premiering in this issue.

Jay Geldhof shows promise as an illustrator. Probably the closest comparison I can draw is to say that his works bears some resemblance to that of Joe Staton, as inked by Mike DeCarlo. As such, it is well-suited to the tone of this strip.

In the number two position is "Zone," which is unquestionably the most intriguing of the tales presented here (also being the only one told as straight drama).

Written and illustrated by Mike Kraiger, "Zone" is apparently a bizarre, square-headed being who resides in a New Jersey swamp that has been polluted by toxic wastes (the implication being that he became Zone when his protective suit ruptured whilst he was dumping a load of such waste).

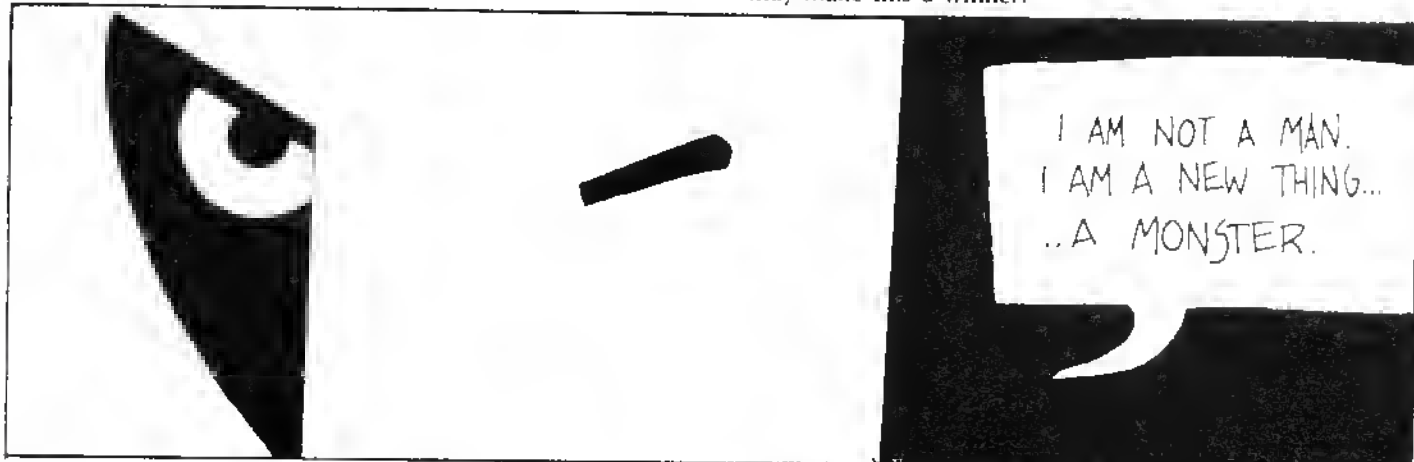
The first chapter focuses on a reporter named Henry, whose series of disturbing dreams draws him to the marshes, where he succeeds in snapping a picture of the enigmatic Zone. Not yet wishing to release the story to the media, Henry instead calls the one person he feels he can trust—an artist named Ultra Violent.

To repeat myself, there is not enough here to allow for granite-firm pronouncements—but I did find myself caught up in the story and thirsting to know the answers to its many questions. Enhancing the lure was the sparse but evocative visual ambiance of the strip. Staying in the comparative mode I've begun, I'll describe the art as Jaime Hernandez, inked by Matt Wagner.

You want a strong hitter in your number three position, but instead *Threat* offers us a strikeout king called "Enigma Funnies," by Gary Fields. This section is composed of a series of one and two-page gag strips (and I use the word "gag" deliberately).

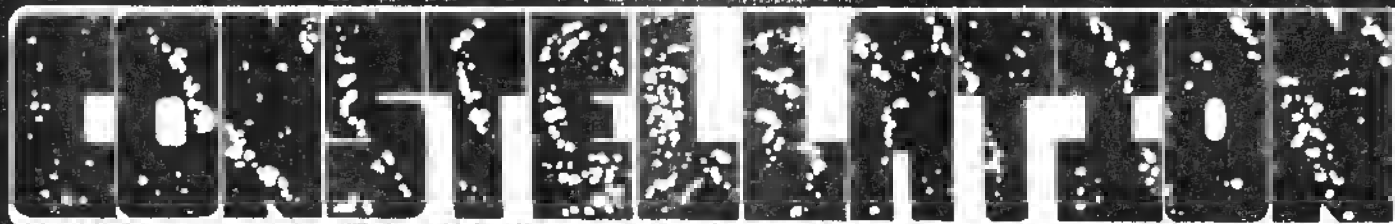
Each features as its "hero" a nameless masked man. His costume sports

The sparse but evocative visual ambiance of "Zone" in *THREAT* may make this a winner.



© 1986 Mike Kraiger

**a new gathering
of stars**



GRAPHICS

**coming in
march**



from stages

COMICS IN REVIEW

a Turkish star and crescent emblem, and he wields a huge wrench as his main weapon (like Freudian to the max). He is a bounty hunter who specializes in slaughtering "mutants and sleazoids."

The strips are yawningly violent and totally without humor. Try this yuk on for size: an awed observer comments on the fact that the hero has "kilt one mess of muties" (and indeed we see some 15 corpses strewn about the masked man's vehicle)—to which the hero replies, "Can't help myself. . . they're kinda like potatoe chips. . . y' jist can't kill one!!"

Oh, but there's penetrating social commentary here as well. While sitting in a bar, the hero is approached by a drunk who asks him if he has ever wondered about another kind of world, in which decent people help instead of kill each other. The hero glances over his shoulder, at one bar patron gunning down another in cold blood, and replies in a very small voice: "No."

I'm afraid Mr. Fields's sense of humor was arrested at the age when some small boys enjoy pulling the wings off butterflies. We'll call his art style "Fred Hembeck on Quaaludes."

A sample of Joseph Clement Coll's superb work from NEMO #16.



Batting clean-up is "The Holo Brothers," by Jim Rohn. Like "Bob Mercenary," it is a science-fiction adventure series interspersed with elements of light humor. The brothers of the title are soldiers of fortune who have found themselves in hot water over the theft of a sacred gem.

At this point, the story holds as much promise as any other new strip, and one of the characters—a talking crow named Tequila—could become a stand-out. Jim Rohn has a solid art style, conveying just the right combination of comedy and drama. To round out our comparative exercise, we'll label it Walt Simonson as inked by Phil Foglio.

On the final score card, *Threat* has one loser ("Enigma Funnies"), two marginal strips ("Bob" and "Holo"), and one strip that could become a star in the Big Leagues ("Zone").

While that isn't enough for me to recommend that you rush out and buy multiple copies, I will suggest that you give *Threat* a three or four-issue tryout to see if it earns a spot on your roster.

NO CARD REQUIRED

NEMO: THE CLASSIC COMICS LIBRARY #16
edited by RICK MARSCHALL
Fantagraphics Books
\$3.50

In recent weeks, I have become increasingly conscious of the many aspects of mainstream, comics-related culture of which I am still woefully ignorant.

I feel no shame in publicly admitting this; ignorance after all denotes merely a lack of knowledge—not stupidity. Stupidity only enters the picture when no effort is made to dispel our ignorance.

I'm grateful to my editors for providing me with the tool with which to begin one portion of my needed education: *Nemo* #16. They were kind enough to send me a copy for inclusion in this review column. I was of course familiar with the magazine's format, but had never closely examined its contents (and I sincerely hope this was due only to budgetary restraints and not to any smug belief that it held no relevance to my line of work).

Nemo is devoted to the consideration of classic newspaper and magazine strips and illustrations, as well as presenting overviews of foreign comics that may be little known to many members of the somewhat insular American comic buying public.

Judging by the single issue in hand, *Nemo* does an admirable job in all those areas, making it an informative and valuable reference work—yet no less enjoyable for its academic veneer.

This issues opens with a look at *Baron Bean*, an obscure strip produced by George (*Krazy Kat*) Herriman from 1916 to 1919. It is in the brief preamble of this section that I encountered my only real area of complaint about the magazine. Editor Rick Marschall is extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the art form, but he occasionally slips into verbosity, during which he perhaps over-intellectualizes the subject. Example: "Herriman's career can be likened to a Rococo Serenade (or perhaps a cassation, divertimento, or even High Baroque Suite). . ." That sounds impressive as hell, but I'm not quite sure what it is that Rick just told me about Herriman. Clarity in the conveyance of a message is always to be preferred over intellectual obfuscation—Baroque or otherwise. See?

This complaint is minor, and easily overshadowed by the delight in losing oneself in seven pages-worth of strips that were produced nearly seven decades ago, during one of the most exciting periods in American history. I did not find the strips reproduced here to be particularly funny or visually engrossing, but neither did I care; it was enough simply to be able to experience this bit of our past.

The next 20 pages are devoted to celebration of the 100th anniversary of Mark Twain's classic *Huckleberry Finn*. Of greatest interest to me was the re-production of an article by E.W. Kemble, the artist who illustrated the first edition of the book. Kemble specialized in portraying black people, and his article (written in 1930) clearly shows the kind of mindset that has only in recent times been frowned upon with any degree of regularity, as when he guilelessly states that "my coons caught the public fancy." I congratulate the *Nemo* crew for having the integrity to present his piece exactly as it was written, rather than diluting it with editorial cuts meant to sidestep modern sensibilities. Also enjoyable were the pages of a Tom Sawyer and *Huckleberry Finn* newspaper strip of which I was heretofore unaware, rendered by Claire Victor Dwiggin.

The middle of the magazine presented a feature that was breathtaking in the impact it had upon me. It contained a brief profile and portfolio of an illustrator named Joseph Clement Coll. The pen and ink artwork presented here is profoundly

powerful.

The man's line work was incredible, the effects he achieved ranging from the sublime to the spectacular. Coll died in 1921, but his vision is certainly still very much alive. Whether he was a direct influence or merely a stylistic antecedent, his lush imagery is mirrored in the work of such latter-day artists as Roy Krenkel, Frank Frazetta, Mike Kaluta, and Berni Wrightson. These samples of Coll's work alone are worth the price of the magazine.

Throw in features spotlighting such European comic heroes as Corto Maltese and Bruno Brazil and an episode of the 1920s newspaper strip "Hairbreadth Harry," and *Nemo* #16 can boast of presenting one of the finest packages to be found on the stands this month (or any other month for that matter).

In briefly scanning a photostat copy of issue #17—which is entirely devoted to Dick Tracy—I daresay that it too is of a level of quality that must be commended.

Doubtless my genuine interest in and love for all forms of visual media accounts for my highly positive response to *Nemo* #16. I think anyone who shares those feelings will want to pick up a copy and immerse themselves in the flow of history. No card is required to check out the marvels in this library.

LOS BROS. DOSE

LOVE AND ROCKETS #15
written and illustrated by GILBERT and JAIME
HERNANDEZ
edited by GARY GROTH
Fantagraphics Books
\$2.25

Time Flies Department: It has been two years now since I surprised a few people (including my editor as I recall) by not only reviewing one of "our" titles, but thoroughly panning it as well. The book was, of course, *Love and Rockets* #5—and the Hernandez Brothers still think of me with much the same regard you have for the scum that forms atop gravy that has sat too long.

Rockets and I have pretty well gone our separate ways since then. I did recently pick up a copy of the *Mechanics* reprint, thinking to give the strip a second chance to favorably impress. I can't comment on the full three issues of that series; after seemingly devoting weeks to wading through the first issue—whose strongest statement seemed to concern the lack of amenities to be found in the



© 1985 Gilbert Hernandez

Gilbert Hernandez's story in *LOVE AND ROCKETS* #15: raw and horrifying.

jungle—I decided to abandon the effort.

I didn't expect my response to *L&R* #15 to be any different—nor, I suspect, did my bosses. When the package containing the material for this column arrived (and after discovering that a good soaking in a tub of water stilled that annoying ticking sound), I decided to save this title for last. Be prepared for a shock.

I didn't hate it.

To be sure, I didn't stand-up-and-cheer love it either; but it certainly made a much more favorable impression on me than did that long ago fifth issue.

There were three vignettes presented in this issue and, for reasons that will become obvious, I will first examine those that began and ended the book.

It opens with an episode of *Las Locas Muchachas*, written and drawn by Jaime Hernandez. As is his (apparent) wont, Jaime doesn't present a story here—merely one interlude from a continuous and evolving longer story. Many of the regulars are here, including Maggie—who is going to fat and uptight about the macho posturing of the men in her life.

This episode worked much better for me than previous ones, because it conveyed a greater sense of reality without totally sacrificing the accoutrements of fictional drama. I use the word reality advisedly; being an Anglo Okie, I have no experience with the world Maggie inhabits. Assuming Los Bros do, I'll simply say this story at least creates the illusion of reality. Not a partic-

ularly pretty reality, and one populated by many rather unlikeable characters—but still interesting to experience vicariously.

The final story, "Queen Rena: Life at 34," also by Jaime, is the weakest of the three offerings. I found myself unable to get caught up in it; the characters were too superficial, the situation uninteresting, and the ending looked remarkably like something one would find in an *Archie* comic.

Both stories are blessed with fine art (though here too I found the first to be superior to the latter). Jaime's somewhat art deco style is clean, sharp, and attractive. It is also highly versatile, being suitable for a variety of different story formats.

Having saved the best for last, I'll now take a look at the middle piece: "Holidays in the Sun," which was written and illustrated by Brother Gilbert. It is the raw and horrifying story of a man imprisoned (in more ways than one). Plagued by unwanted recurring fantasies of his wife (and other women), his reality is one of physical degradation, homosexual liaisons, suicide, and back-breaking hopelessness.

The images presented here are so painful as to twist your guts; so compelling as to make you wish they had occupied the entirety of the issue. It is one of the few comics story that truly deserves its mature audience recommendation. It remains in your mind, echoing like the constant clinking sound of the prisoner's leg manacles.

Gilbert's art is not so slick and attractive as is Jaime's; at times it

COMICS IN REVIEW

appears downright crude. Here, that works to his advantage, for there is nothing slick or attractive about the world he portrays. I was rather surprised to find several illustrations that lent themselves to a comparison with the work of Milton Caniff—though obviously a Caniff far grittier than that of Steve Canyon.

My own publisher has laughed at my insistence that a good story must contain conflict (with the possible exception of works of pure comedy). Perhaps, because of the nature of the vast majority of the books I review, he thinks my idea of conflict is a slugfest between two costumed cretins. Yet there are many forms of conflict, including that which goes in the creative process of telling the story itself. Every human life is defined by a series of never-ending conflicts, and so it should be with human art. Look at "Holidays in the Sun" and tell me I'm wrong.

I have not become a rabid *Love and Rockets* convert by any means, but I recommend that you pick up issue #15 for Gilbert's contribution. It is one of the finest examples of graphic storytelling you can experience.

FLAT JACK

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN JACK #1

written and illustrated by MIKE KAZALEH
edited by GARY GROTH
Fantagraphics Books
\$2.00

Captain Jack is the final dancer to arrive here at the Fantagraphics Critter Cotillion. An anthropomorphic cat, the cap'n is a space-faring wanderer who picks up odd jobs as they become available. Journeying with

him is Adam, a horny canine android; Herman, who is equally canine but presumably non-mechanical; and Beezlebub—a tiny, semi-invisible, mischievous little creature with decidedly demonic overtones.

Captain Jack's mission is to make money wherever and whenever he can. The mission of his comic book is to make you laugh.

Both missions should have been scrubbed.

The first issue is divided into three stories, each vying for the title of "Miss Banality." It's pretty nearly a three-way tie.

We lead off with "The Beatniks From Space!" Captain Jack's ship, the "Glass Onion" (the Beatles should sue), crashes on the planet Espresso while attempting to deliver a cargo of—what else?—coffee. While Jack repairs the vessel, his crew takes ten in a nearby coffee house. We then get to see Herman recite bad poetry for the avant garde audience while Adam exercises his robotic libido with a local trollop. The laughs come as quickly as issues of *Ms. Mystic*.

Disaster strikes when Adam attempts to further demonstrate his sexual versatility with the aid of a Lava Lamp. I must admit to feeling almost ancient when the writer/and or editor found it necessary to explain to the readers just what a Lava Lamp is!

Of course, that leads to the rather obvious question: If most of the perceived readers of this book are too young to remember what a Lava Lamp is—then how many of them are going to know what the hell a Beatnik was? Not that they'll care; especially after reading this.

Still, the story proved to be the best that the book had to offer. Its second

feature was "Planet of the Boob-Tube Widows," about a world in which the men spend all their time watching old episodes of *Gilligan's Island* and *The Flying Nun* and such. (In other words, a planet much like our own.)

Naturally, their disgruntled wives rise up in arms, determined to destroy the insidious influence of video. So guess who arrives on the planet hoping to sell a cargo consisting of 2,000 TV sets?

If you want to see a really funny story about aliens who have been overly influenced by American TV, watch for a re-run of the episode of *Amazing Stories* that deals with the subject (squat little aliens dickering with Milton Berle—what more could you want?).

Finally (yes, the suffering will soon be over), we are presented with "A Wiz There Wuz." Jack and pack are summoned to the home of a great and powerful wizard. That home turns out to be a giant pinball machine, and the wizard is a weirdo who sells novelty items. Think of this story as one big dribble glass.

The best thing that can be said about the stories in *The Adventures of Captain Jack* #1 is that they are not gross or terribly offensive. Unfortunately—neither are they funny in the least. They are so dull and listless that they do not elicit so much as a single wan grin.

Whereas Mike Kazaleh falls hopelessly short in his script, he does exhibit a measure of genuine talent as a cartoonist. His graphics are overly sparse at times, but at their best they manage to capture tiny flashes of some of the later Warner Bros. cartoons (thus it is not surprising that the first story is dedicated to Bob Clampett).

There is one seemingly pointless

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN JACK: Dull and listless, failing to elicit as much as a single grin.



and rather annoying bit of business running through the first two stories: at the bottom of each page is a narrow strip featuring one of the main characters making goofy faces or doing some bit of silly running, jumping, etc. These are repeated over and over, becoming nothing more than a distraction.

As it stands now, I can only recommend *The Adventures of Captain Jack* to those among you who believe that mankind reached the pinnacle of comedic brilliance when it invented the Whoopee Cushion.

HOME COOKIN'

AT HOME WITH RICK GEARY
written and drawn by RICK GEARY
Fantagraphics Books
\$9.95

I'm having difficulty writing this. My hands are shaking, you see. Because of the bandages around my wrists. The ones that cover the cuts. Inflicted by the razor blades.

Because of the severe fit of depression I experienced after reading the first 30 pages of *At Home With Rick Geary*.

These series of cartoons, culled from eight years of Mr. Geary's professional life, are almost unbearably bleak. The people who inhabit his world hide their madness behind the bland smiles of normalcy. Acts of murder are narrated in the same matter-of-fact tones one would use in discussing their laundry.

The strips reek with pessimism. All of existence (including that of Geary himself) is presented as being meaningless in the final analysis. Picture a four-hour movie which had no image save that of a man relentlessly banging his head against a brick wall; oblivious to the futility of such action, unaware of his gushing blood until the moment he expires.

Life is hard and then you die.

Rick Geary is unquestionably a disturbed man.

As am I.

As are you, if you are over the age of 25. Ours is the generation that planned to rock the entire world on its foundations; to re-create it in a newer and brighter image. We thought we had all the answers—until assassins' bullets, politicians' lies, and the grinding passage of time taught us that we never even knew the questions. We looked in the mirror one day and discovered that we had become the very people we hated most.

We handled this revelation in different ways. Some made the transition with disturbing ease, throwing their love beads away with their ideals and donning the three-piece suit of conformity, security, and moral ambiguity.

Some hopelessly clung to those aspects of the dream that never had real substance, becoming mind-blown vegetables who lacked the insight to realize they clung to an orthodoxy as choking as that held by their fathers, and the guts to face a life that wasn't utopian.

Some, while beaten down, were neither broken nor assimilated. They learned to view life with a jaundiced eye, but not to forsake it. They realized that imperfect people would never create a perfect world, yet clung to the belief that there is that within us that, if properly nurtured, can grow into perfection. I hope I am one of those people. The ideals remain, tempered by healthy doses of pragmatism.

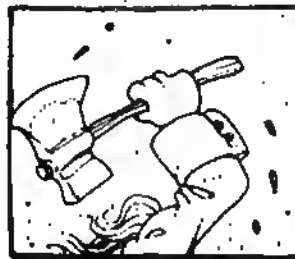
Too often, Rick Geary seems to be lost in cynicism that holds no promise. But in those moments when his sense of humor is allowed to

fortunately true of all too many people, it is not a point with which one needs or desires to be pounded into the pavement. The size of this volume (102 pages) works against it, concentrating Geary's gloomy world view into a dosage that chokes. He observes, but he does not enlighten. He categorizes our very real sins, but offers no hope of salvation. (And indeed, he may feel there is no hope.)

But in those moments when he comments without condemning—ah, there we have the true measure of this artist. They were moments I savored and would like to briefly share.

Moments called: "Our Holy Relic," the story of a middle-class family which buys the desecrated arm of a purported saint at a church rummage sale! In a similar vein, he gives us "The Miraculous Image," in which a woman spills a glass of wine—leaving a stain that resembles the image of Jesus Christ. Having been raised a Catholic, I can truly appreciate Geary's iconoclasm.

He comments on the growing decay of personal relationships in "My New Dad." The foolish and



AND WITH IT BELABORED MY WIFE AND HER SISTER.



I THEN PUT THEM IN THE COTTAGE AND SET IT AFIRE.



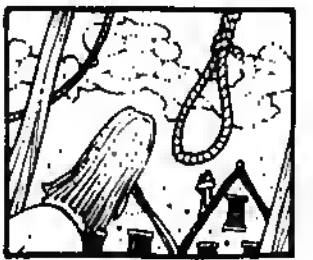
THE NEAR AS I COULD TELL WAS AT ABOUT 4:15 PM.



I NEVER BEFORE HAD EXHIBITED SUCH BEHAVIOR.



MANY FOLKS BELIEVE ME A TOOL OF SATAN.



I AM CERTAINLY AT A LOSS AS TO EXPLAIN MY ACTIONS.

© 1986 Rick Geary

AT HOME WITH RICK GEARY: Suicidally depressing and cynical.

shine through, when he treats life as a marvelous lunacy rather than a crushing weight—in those moments he makes brilliantly incisive observations on the human condition.

Those moments are, regrettably, in the minority here. Fully two-thirds of the strips re-presented here (having originally appeared in such publications as *High Times* and *Heavy Metal*) seem to serve no purpose other than to trivialize life; to show people so mired in mediocrity that they have no escape save through murder or self-delusion.

While such observations are unfortunately true of all too many people,

unbearable restraints that have been placed on women's minds and hearts are explored with probing black humor in "Poison in the Pantry," and "A Victorian Murder."

Murder is a recurring theme in Geary's strips—he sees a world in which people frequently choose this most heinous of solutions; a world where life has been so cheapened that the taking of it is considered to be an eminently viable option and no more to be agonized over or condemned than an inadvertent belch. In this, I fear, Geary is all too correct.

In "Communal Life" and "A Sixties Memory" Geary looks back at his own youth and that of his generation.

COMICS IN REVIEW

He casts a harsh light on the foibles and follies to which they were prone; one undimmed by distorted nostalgia.

I have a feeling *At Home With Rick Geary* will be yet another book that does not sell terribly well for Fantagraphics Books. Much of his message will be lost on younger readers, and even many older readers will ignore it because it's not a "normal" comic book. I myself am frankly loathe to strongly recommend it at such a high price (but oh what a marvelous 32-page one-shot could have been made from the very best of the material here).

Still, I would suggest that you search it out at your local book store—invest the time it would take to thumb through it and read a few strips (most are but a single page in length).

You may find it to be a gem that would otherwise escape your notice; one you'll wish to take home and savor more fully.

BITING THE HAND

Fantagraphics publisher Gary Groth has been the subject of many a scurrilous comment—which, for all I know, may be totally deserved. Still, I have to respect his willingness to put his money where his mouth is

by publishing books he knows will probably not be commercially successful simply because he believes they deserve to see print. I must also admit to a certain feeling of satisfaction in knowing that it takes something such as *Amazing Heroes*—of which he is openly and utterly contemptuous—to provide the funds for his more esoteric publishing ventures.

Groth is beginning to bow to financial pressures, realizing that he must make a profit in order to continue publishing anything. I fear that his past, rather self-righteous denunciations of other publishers who have made similar artistic compromises will soon come back to haunt him—probably when the first issue of *John Byrne Classics* hits the stands.

Why has Groth had such relatively dismal luck in his comics projects? I have my own theory, for what it's worth, and would like to pass it along for consideration.

Gary suffers from what I term "Fellini Syndrome." This is in reference to those film critics who continually praise the work of that genius whether they understand his movies or not (such critics perhaps being so cowed or insecure that they never consider the possibility that some of his work may actually be bad).

So it seems with Groth, who has

carried his disdain for mainstream comics to extremes. If it doesn't have superheroes in it, and/or it doesn't make sense—it must be art. These are the types of comics he admires and, more and more often, publishes. Such books indeed have no costumed protagonists—but many of them also exhibit no humor, no focus, no theme, no emotional validity, and make no great statements of profundity.

If they fail to sell, it is not so much because comic book readers are brainwashed morons as because the books are incapable of stimulating interest in more than a handful of readers. To judge from the letter columns, many of the fans these books do attract cling to a common misconception—that they are somehow more "real" than is an issue of *Spider-Man*. Doubtless these are the same sort of folk who convince themselves that such hyperbolic cinematic drivel as *Terms of Endearment* deal with reality.

Even so, Gary Groth publishes much to which he can point with pride: *Dalgoda*, *Nemo*, *Prince Valiant*, the "Focus On" series. While his personal peccadillos make him irritating if not downright detestable, he remains steadfast in his professional drive—and in the process occasionally provides us with solid gold.

B·MOVIE PRESENTS

TWO EXCITING
FEATURES IN EACH
ACTION-PACKED ISSUE!

1930's style science-fiction as Captain Daring battles to save Earth from total destruction, when it falls 'Under a Black Venusian Sky'.

plus....
Super cops of the future fight to keep the world free of crime and drugs. This is one cop's story, the story of X-Ray, and 'The Midnight Connection'.



B·Movie Comics
Your
Ticket
To
Entertainment!

ASK FOR IT AT YOUR LOCAL
COMIC BOOK RETAIL OUTLET!



AMAZING READERS

PHIL FOGLIO
Chicago, IL

Contract Violations

Phil Foglio would like it made clear that it was due to multiple contract violations on the part of WaRP Graphics which resulted in his quitting *Myth Adventures*, and not "deadline difficulties" as quoted.

BIZARRO MAPLE
Weston, Ontario

Keep Up Rotten Job

Me was calm to read in #84 that Bizarro World am not going to survive changes to Superman by the rotten John Byrne. This news am really expected after putrid *Crisis on Infinite Earths* maxi-series. All the worlds wonderfully destroyed in *Crisis* am ugly round shape. Me think that this means that they forgot square Bizarro World. On the one hand, this would be great honor—to be only world ignored of all. But on the other hand (good thing me got only two hands or me here all day talking!), me think Bizarro World *deserves* to be destroyed! If am good enough for Earth-3, am surely good enough for BW! ("BW" mean "Bizarro World." Don't worry if didn't figure it out. Am good to be dumb. Also, me have superior Bizarro-Brain, remember! Hmmm, but it am better to be dumb, how can me be superior if am not dumber? . . . My head hurt.) So, anyway. Me think am really horrible idea to get rid of Bizarro world! But me have question. Am BW (Bizarro World, remember?) to be destroyed or just ignored? Me hope it is "ignored" because that am even *more* insulting!

One problem am that me not on BW since me am living in wonderful cage at Fortress of Mapletude, with friend T.M. Maple. Maybe me find way to destroy self when BW am go kabloowey. One thing am for sure, if me go, me am taking T.M. with me. He be so pleased! (If DC only ignore BW, me will just have to ignore self—will be hard but me think me can do it.)

So, keep up the really rotten job you are doing at *Amazing Heroes*. And me hope that you find new editor who can really add that extra

dimension that will make your mag really stink!

PS: Destroy me before me write again!

PPS: What? No Bizarro Micro-Series?

★ *Me feeling kinda funky meself, B.M. Me thinks all not promising yet. Ugly Superman may being changed yet remaining the same, but what about us and square-faced dupes? Is it possible four-color minions will re-explain square world and the rest of our format? Don't read John Byrne and me never find out!* —ABC

WALLACE I. GREEN
Yonkers, NY

The Betrayal of the JLA

If you expect your readers to take your magazine seriously, your articles will have to be more accurate. You can't take some fan's imagined idea of what happened and print it as fact. I'm referring to "Wood's War," in issue #84.

I don't know who Jeffery Saltarella is and what his qualifications are. I do know he was nowhere near Wes-

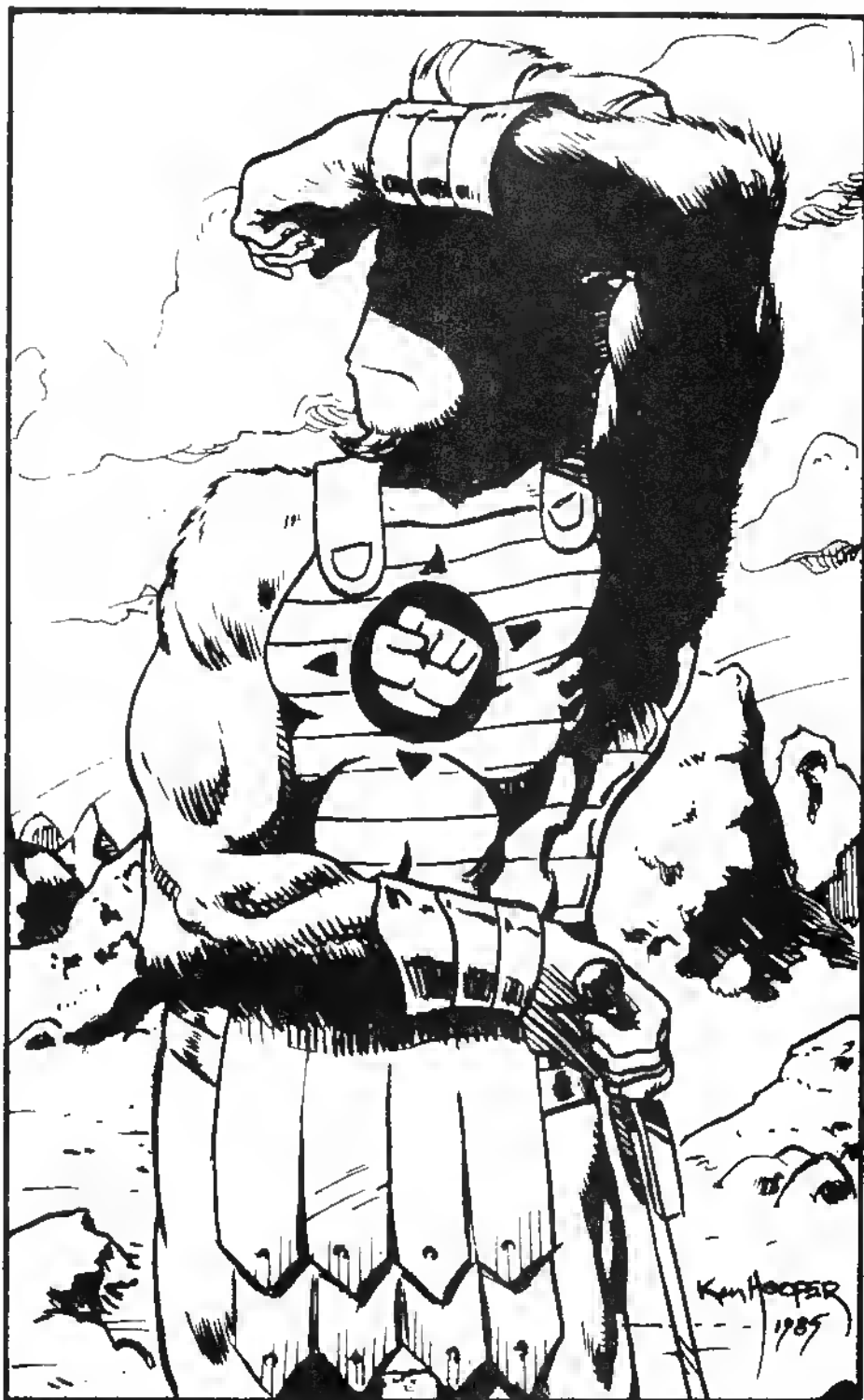


Illustration by KEN HOOPER; character © First Comics, Inc.

AMAZING READERS

tern Publishing when *Total War—M.A.R.S. Patrol* was being published.

About the only thing he got right is that Wally Wood illustrated the first three issues.

Aside from ignorance of the facts, Saltarella makes an ominous sounding and totally inexplicable statement when he writes, regarding the Comics Code: "Gold Key, protected by the powerful Disney interests, had never had to subscribe."

Wally Wood was succeeded by veteran artist Mike Roy, not by newcomer Mike Royer. The similarity in names might confuse an outsider, but for a comics aficionado not to know the difference is like a historian getting mixed up between Andrew Johnson and Andrew Jackson.

Please pardon my kvetching, but I just couldn't let these statements pass without comment.

★ *As this letter (and Mark Evanier's last issue) proves, we blew it pretty badly with the M.A.R.S. Patrol article, and we hope these two letters set the record straight. Alas, we don't know everything and neither does anybody else. That's why I'll never be able to run for President.*

Recently, we printed and commented on a letter of complaint by Elliot S. Maggin. Both of us had our points, and since R.A. and I get to air ours in these pages all the time, I thought I'd take the liberty of printing Elliot's follow-up. —ABC

ELLIOT S. MAGGIN
Campton, NH

Some Public Statement

Frankly, the Jones review did not so much anger as bewilder me. I realize that the story in question was not one of my best: it was one of several continuity tie-ins that, given DC's commitment, however, questionable, to sweeping character redefinition, I felt it my responsibility to provide. The story had no center; its faults lay, I believe, in structure rather than execution. The reasons your reviewer cited for disliking it were precisely its qualities that I thought admirable. The review would have been easier for me to understand if rather than a formally reasoned essay it had been a simple scale rating, say, three or four out of ten.

I wrote to you because (1) I considered the review inexcusably imperceptive and (2) believing I would soon be leaving comics, I felt it was time I made some public statement about the protocols and economics of the field—the creative and market

crisis—that I feel is ignored or just not widely understood by comics commentators like yourself and R.A. Jones. I tried to direct my emotions of the moment to encourage this discussion.

Here's an example: When DC policy makers called for a new direction for Superman, I suggested an overall business plan rather than a creative redefinition. In the discussion that followed the submission of several proposals it became clear that an agenda for the character's future was already in existence, and that any discussion to which those of us who had ever been associated with the character were privy, was quite perfunctory. This is not new, but a continuation of a less than tolerable situation.

My point continues to be that public discussion is now in order. The only difference is that now, having excluded myself from that which is private and perfunctory, I am in a position to initiate such discussion myself.

PAUL ADAMS
Fountain, CO

Never Gets Too Much

Happy Holidays! A few comments on recent issues from the Colorado Kid.

Lou Mougin's Batman biography is worth the price of admission by itself. Lou has a flair for gathering material from all over and turning that material into a first-rate article. I am eagerly awaiting the next installment, as well as Lou's next project.

I do have a problem with a 53-year-old Batman (not to mention a 35-year-old Dick Grayson). Perhaps the chosen birthdates were necessitated by the sheer volume of adventures Batman has experienced. I hope the reason was not so young Bruce could see the Shadow in action, as the Shadow was active through the '40s

in the pulps and starred in a series of paperbacks in the mid-'60s.

All of this confusion could have been avoided if Marv Wolfman had taken Crisis a step further. By stating that an after-effect of the Crisis had left many of the heroes younger than when they started, Marv could have preserved the lengthy pasts of the heroes (or at least selected portions of their pasts) while keeping them young and vital. Oh well, maybe Marv just forgot to mention it in all the excitement.

Speaking of the Crisis (how's that for a blend?), I must take one of the "deaths" as less than final. We all saw Barry Allen die in the Crisis, right? Well, maybe. Remember how Iris was revived in Flash #350? Her parents knew the date of her death as a matter of history, and were able to extract the essence of her personality or soul and put it in a recently dead body. Who's to say they didn't do the same for Barry? For all we know, Barry and Iris are living in the 30th Century, ready to have kids—Don and Dawn Allen, as a matter of fact. There you have it—Barry Allen lives!

Speaking of living, I hope I'm not alone in hoping that someone, somewhere, saved a clone sample from Bloodstone and Brad Carter. R.A. Jones's article brought back memories of the character, most of them fond. I've always had a weakness for the Doc Savage type of character—big, powerful, nearly god-like, but with human failings emphasized by their assistants. Bloodstone was a classic case of wasted potential. Too much potential to go to waste. Anyone else up for a revival of the character—say, a back-up slot in *Marvel Fanfare*? (All this excitement over a character "dead" for a decade—the direct result of great writing. Take a bow, R.A.)

Loved the William Stout portfolio. All too often, portfolios are run to fill up space, not on the basis of talent. Such was obviously not the case there. Bill Stout deserved the space, and left me wanting more. Stout is

He's Back!
ETERNITY
SMITH
In July from **Renegade Press**

a class act.

Must let you know that I got your "Michigan Rag" comment in #83's Coming Distractions. Did you know that that song was written especially for "A Froggy Evening"? Sure you did.

I can hardly wait for next issue. And the *Preview Special*. I can never get too much of this good thing. Accept my thanks, and take care.

RON MURILLO
Alamo, CA

The JLA Needs Redefining

G.O. Wilson's letter in *AH* #84 reflected the feelings of many of the faithful readers of the JLA. I disagree, however, with his opinion that the comic "needs now one last writer to give it a last show of greatness, then cancel the book with the League standing at the pinnacle of nobility." Poppycock! I'm sure many fans felt the same way about *The Teen Titans*, pre-Marv Wolfman, or the Roy Thomas-Gerry Conway *Fantastic Four*, or whoever handled *Daredevil* before Frank Miller came along.

The Justice League has been my favorite book, since *Brave and the Bold* #28, which I still have a copy of. I have seen its good times and bad, and I agree that the past year or two rates as its lowest point. The stories have floundered, the characters have remained shallow, and, as all have pointed out, the book seems a ready candidate for cancellation.

Cancellation is not the answer. It's an easy way out. In my mind, the book needs redefinition. A writer should come in, or, at best, Gerry Conway should consider a point that he has made in many issues, but has never taken to its conclusion. What is the League? What does it stand for? What are its goals in existing? The present day League has no purpose other than trying to establish a place to live. It battles menaces it comes across, but the threats are never as important to a story as whether Steel is going to date Vibe's sister, or who sleeps with Moses Gunn first, Zatanna or Vixen?

The X-Men have a goal. The Teen Titans have a purpose. The New Justice League have neither, and this is where the book fails. Without goal and/or purpose, the JLA is reduced to a maudlin soap opera on a par with the Squadron Supreme. The Justice League is not a group of individuals thrown together, it is an efficient organization banded together for a common goal.

The Justice League is not a soap opera. It has never had to be. The Justice League, before the new team, was a book of character, but also of suspense, spectacle and high adventure. One need not look as far back as Gardner Fox for that. Conway's own "Beasts" trilogy of recent years is a shining example of how the League worked together, not as bickering children, but as a team. We can hope that the League will return to its firm establishment of purpose and goal. All it needs is a chance.

★ *Actually, although I haven't read the last few issues, I think the new JLA—whatever shortcomings it may have—is better than the old, which suffered from a story formula essentially 25 years old. At least by changing the cast, Gerry Conway had more editorial freedom, more characters under his complete control. Compare, for instance, how he planned to handle Aquaman before the mini-series was given the go-ahead. Authors need the creative freedom to make mistakes, to be unpopular for a short time, etc., if they have a goal. And although I'm frequently very critical of Gerry's writing, I think we should be sympathetic to his goals.* —ABC

FRED GRANDINETTI
Watertown, MA

DC Has Offended Many Readers

I would like to add my comments to the letter by Jeff Moulton, "Wolfman: Mass Murderer," presented in *Amazing Heroes* #84. While I try not to take comic book characters too seriously, I can't help but agree to every thing he had to say. DC has offended many readers by destroying so much of Earth-2 and the other universes, while Earth-1's landmarks and characters have remained pretty much intact (take a good look at *Crisis* #11).

I understand DC's reasoning for discarding the duplicate characters, but, to be accurate about it, the Golden Age Superman, Wonder Woman, Hawkman and Hawkgirl came first, the Earth-1 versions, second, thereby they are the duplicates. The golden Age Supes and WW were by far more interesting than their younger counterparts because DC allowed them to grow and age. Now, they seem to be discarding them for the same reasons that made them so enduring. Honestly—would you rather follow the career of the Golden Age WW, whose life was

somewhat stable, or her Earth-1 counterpart who changed jobs and supporting casts almost every year?

Why did every trace of the Golden Age characters' presence on Earth have to fade from view? If it happened to one character, okay, but to Superman, Wonder Woman and Batman? Yes, I know the Earth-2 Batman died, but did his daughter, the Huntress, have to perish too? This is one lady who really hit it off with the readers, but, she had too much of a confusing background to new readers and was discarded. I have this strange feeling that many of the



Illustration by MATTHEW NELSON, character © Marvel Comics Group

ELFLORD

MONTHLY

BUY THIS BOOK
OR I KILL THIS
ELF!

U'IP!



c 1986 Aircel Publishing

characteristics Helena Wayne had are going to be transplanted to Barbara Gordon when she makes her debut as the "new" Batgirl.

Honestly, I don't know if I'm going to be reading the events that take place in the "New" DC Universe. They've done too much to push me away, as with most readers who feel the same, I'll have to wait and see what next year brings.

CONRAD P. FELBER

Terrace Bay, Ontario, Canada

What about the Canadians?

I recently received a copy of your *Amazing Heroes Preview Special #2* and I enjoyed it thoroughly, right from the *Action Comics* entry to the *Zot!* update. Well, okay, there was just one part that I didn't like, and it was right on the first text page.

To be a little more specific, check Mark Waid's editorial, 19th paragraph. Allow me to quote him: "The Preview Issue this time covers an unprecedented 300⁺ American and British comics titles." Did you catch that? American and British comics titles. Notice something missing? Darn tootin'! What about the Canadian comics titles? Granted, there are not too many of them, but I still feel we Canucks were overlooked in your editorial. Need I remind you that Canada is the home of Vortex Comics, not to mention Matrix Graphics Series and—oh yes—Aardvark-Vanaheim, which only happens to publish the best comic today, *Cerebus*. Tsk, tsk, tsk. The war of 1812 started over less than this, fellows.

★ *That's right, and while the US of A may have lost the war, we got the better movies out of the deal. Or don't you remember Yul Brynner as Jean LeFect?*

Or was it LaFoot? —ABC

BYRON BENEDYK
Gary, IN

Appreciates the Spectrum

Just finished the *War and Peace* of comics, the *Amazing Heroes Preview Special #2*.

As always, I appreciated the spectrum of titles that you covered, and I'm looking forward to the debut of new efforts such as the *Cases of Sherlock Holmes* and *Howard Chaykin's Time²*.

But, unfortunately, it also brought the bad news of Mike Grell's desire to eventually leave *Jon Sable*, and the end for now at least of America's Greatest Hero, Megaton Man! After issue 12, Rambo and Stallonovich will just have to pick up the slack.

So that was the good and the bad of the *Amazing Preview*. And hey, where can I get a subscription to *Willie Wonka's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents*?

★ *I don't know about getting a subscription, but for a good time call 819-624-7653. I understand the people at that establishment have got a lot of thunder on their minds.*

FRED GRANDINETTI
Watertown, MA

Batwoman Follower

Although I have only recently started to read *Amazing Heroes*, I have enjoyed each issue I've purchased very much and intend to purchase back issues. My comments concern the second half of *The Batman Biography* published in #85. I'm glad you mentioned Kathy Kane, The Batwoman in the article. You were correct in stating that she was catching

crooks, "a long time before women's lib." Batman wasn't worried about her safety as much as he was being showed up by a woman! Many critics have regarded Batwoman as being "cutesy" or a part of the Bat-clutter that appeared in Batman's stories in the late-'50s and early '60s. However, they fail to point out that Batwoman saved the caped crusader as many times as he saved her, even if it was just a one panel shot of Batwoman kicking a gun out of a crook's hand just as he was about to shoot Batman.

After the new look Batman appeared, Kathy was forgotten and did not reappear until reader demand forced her return in the pages of *Batman Family*. Although updated a slight, she was still an exciting character, but, never had a chance to really shine, instead, when Batman's sales and reader interest began to decline, Kathy was "killed off" to get reader's attentions back to the masked manhunter! Kathy was used as a scapegoat, a more likely character to have been dumped, should have been either Vicki (dull) Vale or the present-day Batgirl! Kathy did return a year later in *Brave & Bold* #182, "Interlude on Earth-2," a wonderful tale that dealt more with character relationships rather than action. This was the Earth-2 Kathy Kane, however, and in this tale we learned that she retired, not to open a circus, as her Earth-1 version did, but, because the Batman of that world married The Catwoman. With the advent of *Crisis*, I doubt we will ever see this Kathy Kane again! This is truly a shame, as she was an excellent supporting character over the years and it's too bad she must be forced into limbo once more when such bland characters as Barbara (Batgirl) Gordon are still around. The Batwoman did have a following, and, whether DC knows it or not, she is missed!



Cartoon by ADAM STOLLER; characters © Marvel Comics Group

"Small press" is a catch-all term for comics with low enough print runs that any profit is negligible. Many are photocopied and all titles listed here are in black and white on white paper unless otherwise noted. Page count includes covers.

To order any of the items on this page, just send a short note with your name and address on it listing the comic(s) you want and enclose your payment. Cash is fine, and recommended

on small orders, but make sure it doesn't show through the envelope. Also tape down any loose change. The address for each item appears at the beginning of its review. Please do not try to order from me or from *Amazing Heroes*.

I'll indicate postage on each item. "Ppd" = post-paid (price includes postage). Stamps, unless otherwise noted, should be the regular 22¢ first class type.

Letters of comment are welcomed by just about everyone, and if you have comics of your own, trades can often be arranged. You're welcome to send them to me too. I can only review a fraction of what comes out, but I'll definitely read it and try to respond with a postcard at least. You can reach me at P.O. box 698, Tarrytown NY, 10591-0698. (Comments about this column should be sent to AH as usual.)
—SCOTT McCLOUD



THE TRAGEDY OF MORTY, PRINCE OF DENMARKE (sic) by Steve Willis. \$10.00 ppd. for the whole set of five magazines (one for each act)/Steve Willis, 385½ Irving, Pullman, WA 99163.

RETREADS #3, \$2.00 ppd./same address.

Steve Willis has been drawing his unique brand of comics for more than a decade now, making him something of a veteran in small press terms. He's also a true small presser, since he shows little or no interest in "breaking into" the more profitable comics market. Willis has a job, thank you very much, and would rather be making comics his way and at his own pace. As I see it, he's everything a good amateur cartoonist should be: prolific, funny, imaginative, loose, uninhibited, expressive, and just a bit wacko. His work makes no claims to perfection, but manages to come closer than most of his peers, in part because his idiosyncratic style can only be measured by its own peculiar standards, not by anyone else's.

The Tragedy of Morty, Prince of Denmarke is Willis's retelling of Shakespeare's most inexhaustible play, using the reknowned Morty the Dog in the title role. Willis himself appears as the loyal Horatio and a host of other "players" from Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble to Cap'n Crunch help fill out the cast. As might be expected, Willis has a lot of fun altering lines every few panels and tossing in sight gags (some of which work, while others just get in the way), but he's very appreciative of the play's themes, and his comic is by any standards a serious effort. Its length alone (180 pages) is evidence of that. I don't think *Morty* should be seen as some kind of "magnum opus" for this talented cartoonist, especially since Willis himself is unhappy with much of his work on it, but it's still a one-of-a-kind look at a one-of-a-kind play and it makes for some great reading.

If *The Tragedy of Morty* sounds a bit too voluminous for your tastes, the newly released *Retreads #3*



I WOULD GIVE YOU SOME VIOLETS, BUT THEY WITHERED ALL WHEN MY FATHER DIED - THEY SAY 'A MADE A GOOD END.



Three unconnected panels from *MORTY*, showing "Dfeelys's" mad descent.

might be a better place to get acquainted with Willis's offbeat styles. *Retreads* is a running collection of Willis cartoons and illustrations that have appeared in other magazines and Newsletters through the years. There are one or two in-jokes that newcomers might not get, but most of the material is funny, imaginative, and pure Willis.



All art © 1985 Steve Willis



Top: One of the five volumes of *THE TRAGEDY OF MORTY, PRINCE OF DENMARKE* by Steve Willis; 7" x 8½" with coated paper covers and variable page count from 30-48 pages. Above: Willis's *RETREADS #3* and one of the stranger drawings from same. *RETREADS* is in the same format as *MORTY* and contains 36 pages.

IT'S THE PULSE POUNDING • SENSES SHATTERING • MIND BENDING • BAT FISHING • **BOJEFFRIES SAGA** BY SPI NE WARPING • ASS KICKING • NOSE WIPING • TOE SMA SHING • SHIN SPLINTERING **ALAN MOORE** AND THUMB BREAKING • EYE GOUGING • THROAT RIPPING • EAR SPL ITTING • HEART STOMPING • **STEVE PARKHOUSE** APPEA RING IN THE FLESH STRIPP ING • LIP STRETCHING • THI G ENTIRE NER M SHORT CIRCU E BRUISING • JOI G • **DALGODA 8!** RINDING • NOSTR • KIDNEY DAMA T TWISTING • SHI



SOMETHING'S HAPPENING IN MY P.U.J.A.M.A.S.

YOU WANTED HIM--YOU GOT HIM!



**IS BACK IN AN ALL-NEW SERIES--
MIND-BENDING MONTHLY ADVENTURES
GUARANTEED TO DRIVE YOU BUGGY!**



**SENSATIONAL STORIES BY LEN WEIN!
OUTRAGEOUS ART BY PARIS CULLINS & BRUCE PATTERSON!**